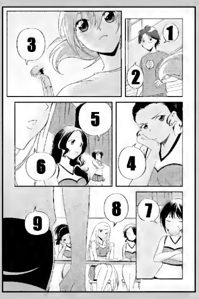
By the highly-acclaimed creator of COURTNEY CRUMRIN!

# UNEARTHLY

TED NAIFEH • ELMER DAMASO

# READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



story Ted Naifeh art Elmer Damaso

# UNEARTHLY

## VOLUME 1

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Publisher: Seven Seas Entertainment

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ISBN: 1-933164-09-3

Manufactured in the United States of America

First printing: September, 2005

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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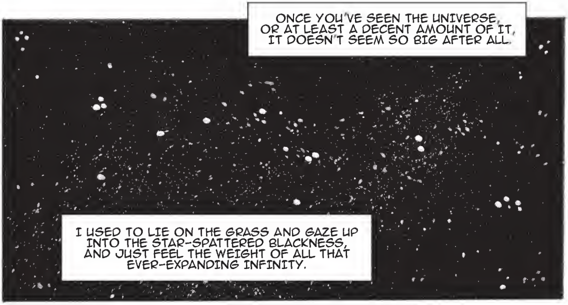
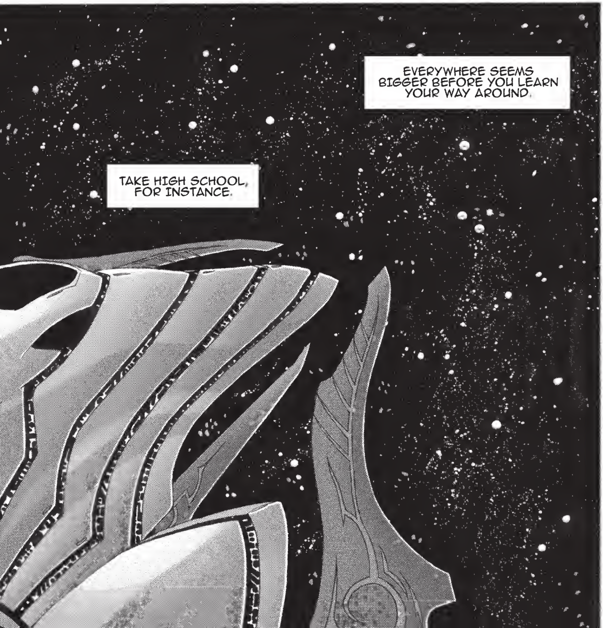
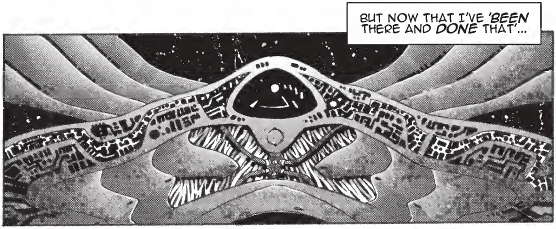
unearthly

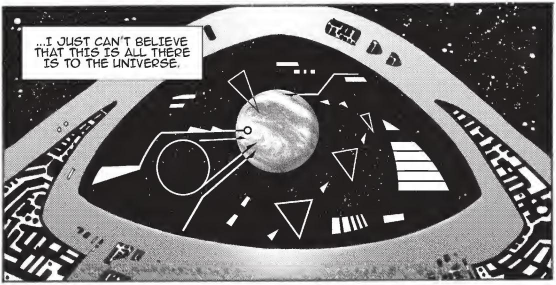
VOLUME 1

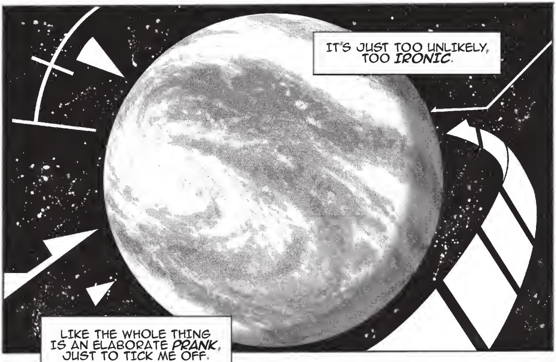
2001:
A SPACE
ODYSSEY


ONCE YOU'VE SEEN THE UNIVERSE, OR AT LEAST A DECENT AMOUNT OF IT, IT DOESN'T SEEM SO BIG AFTER ALL.
I USED TO LIE ON THE GRASS AND GAZE UP INTO THE STAR-SPATTERED BLACKNESS, AND JUST FEEL THE WEIGHT OF ALL THAT EVER-EXPANDING INFINITY.

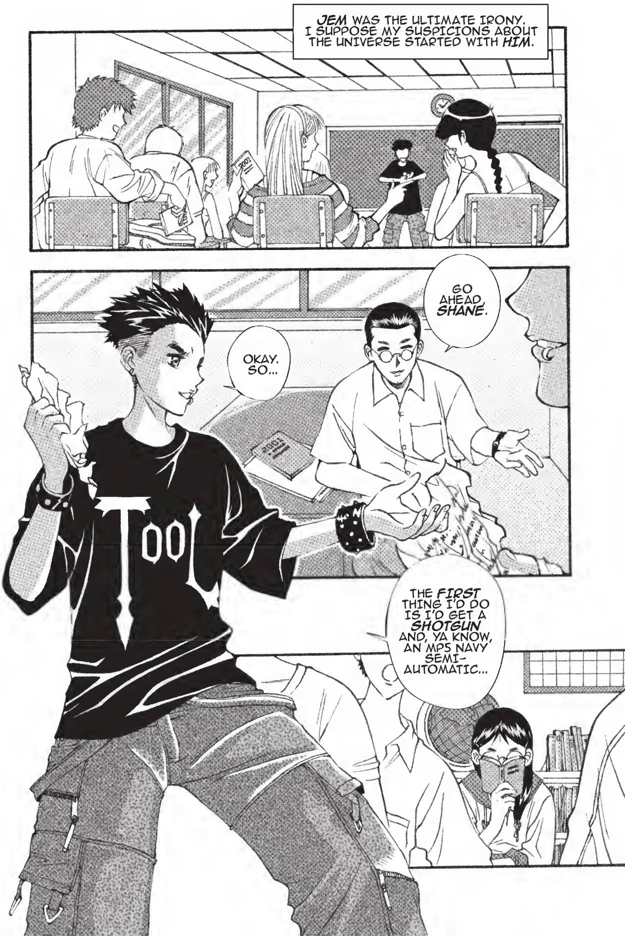

EVERYWHERE SEEMS BIGGER BEFORE YOU LEARN YOUR WAY AROUND.
TAKE HIGH SCHOOL, FOR INSTANCE.

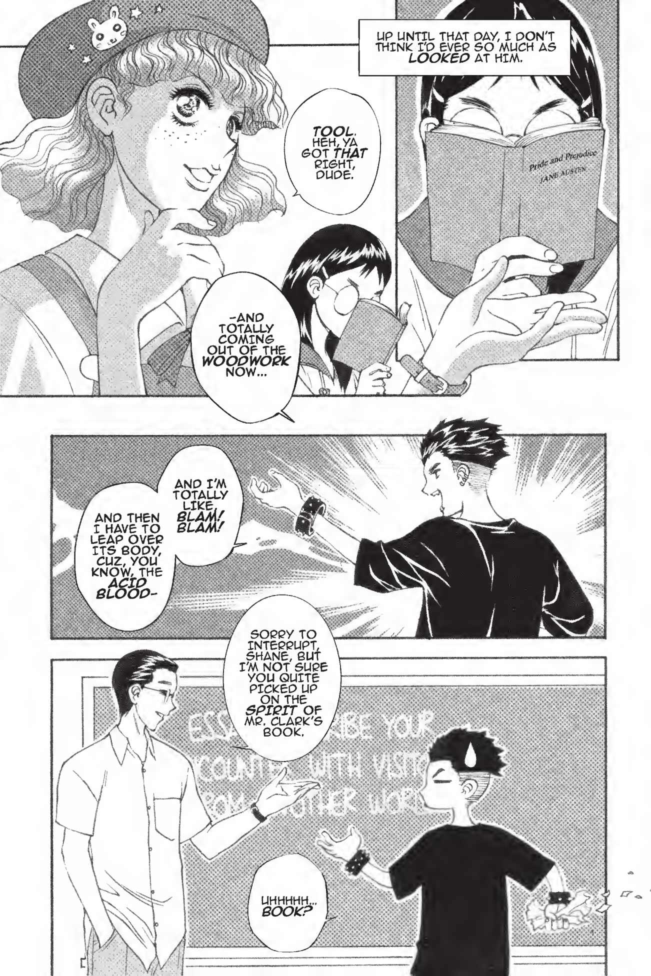

BUT NOW THAT I'VE *'BEEN* THERE AND *DONE* THAT'...

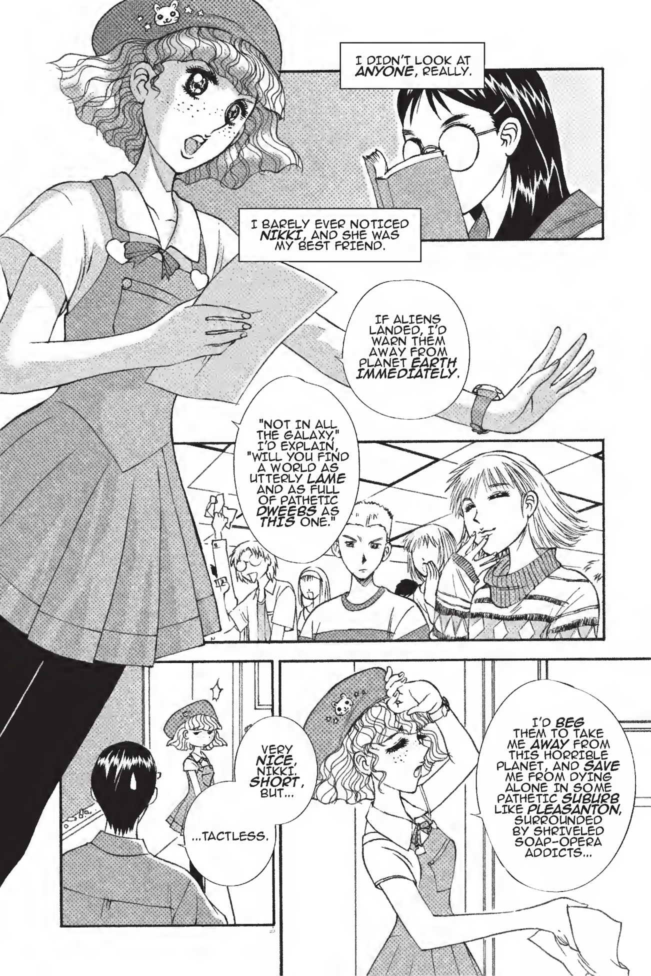

...I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THAT THIS IS ALL THERE IS TO THE UNIVERSE.

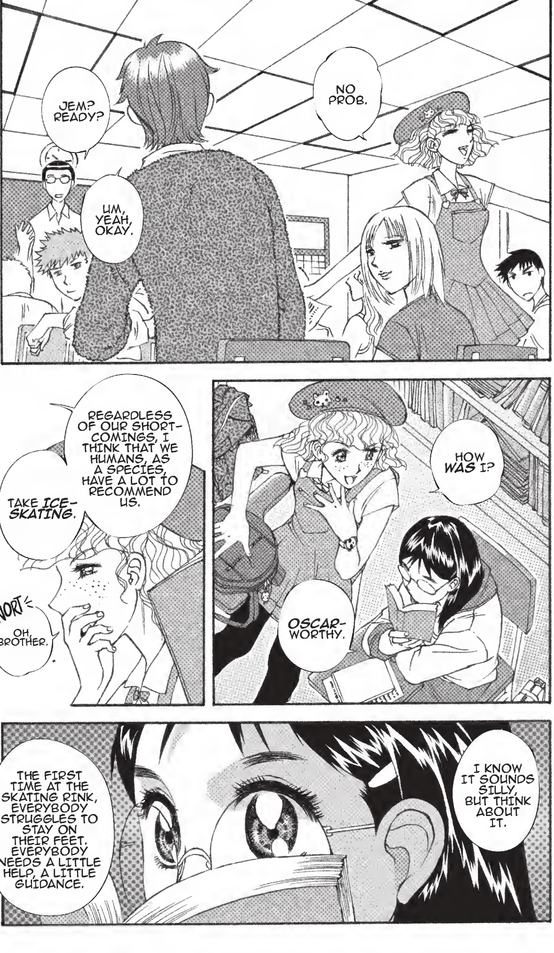

IT'S JUST TOO UNLIKELY, TOO *IRONIC*.
LIKE THE WHOLE THING IS AN ELABORATE *PRANK*, JUST TO TICK ME OFF.

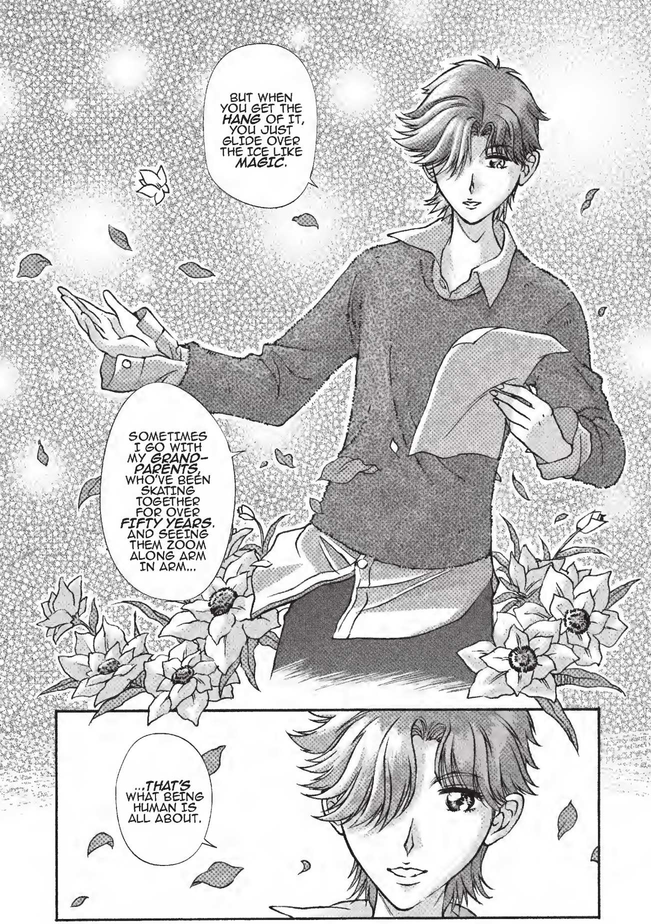
# UNEARTHLY chapter 1

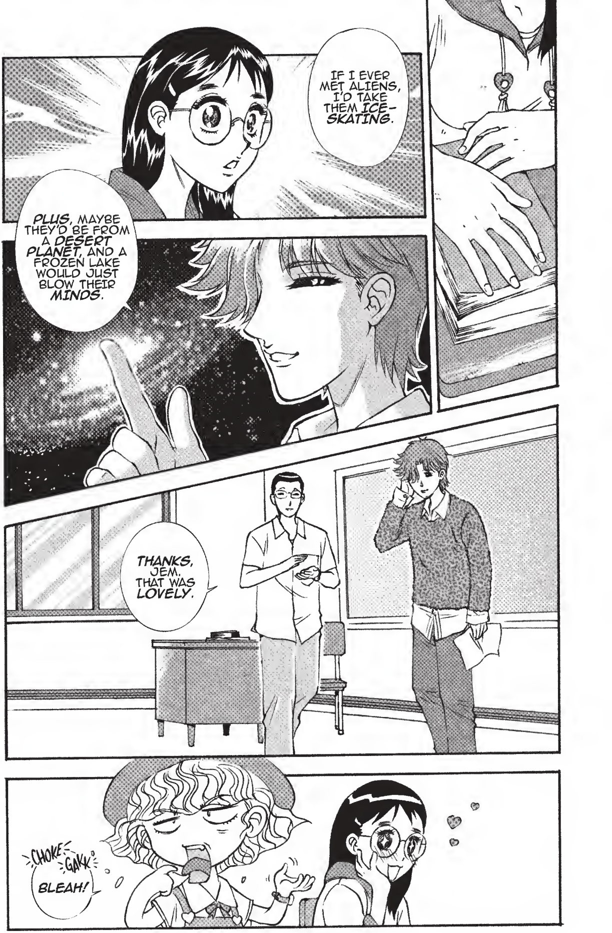

JEM WAS THE ULTIMATE IRONY. I SUPPOSE MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE UNIVERSE STARTED WITH HIM.
2001
GO AHEAD, SHANE.
OKAY. SO...
2001
TOOL
THE FIRST THING I'D DO IS I'D GET A SHOTGUN AND, YA KNOW, AN MP5 NAVY SEMI-AUTOMATIC...

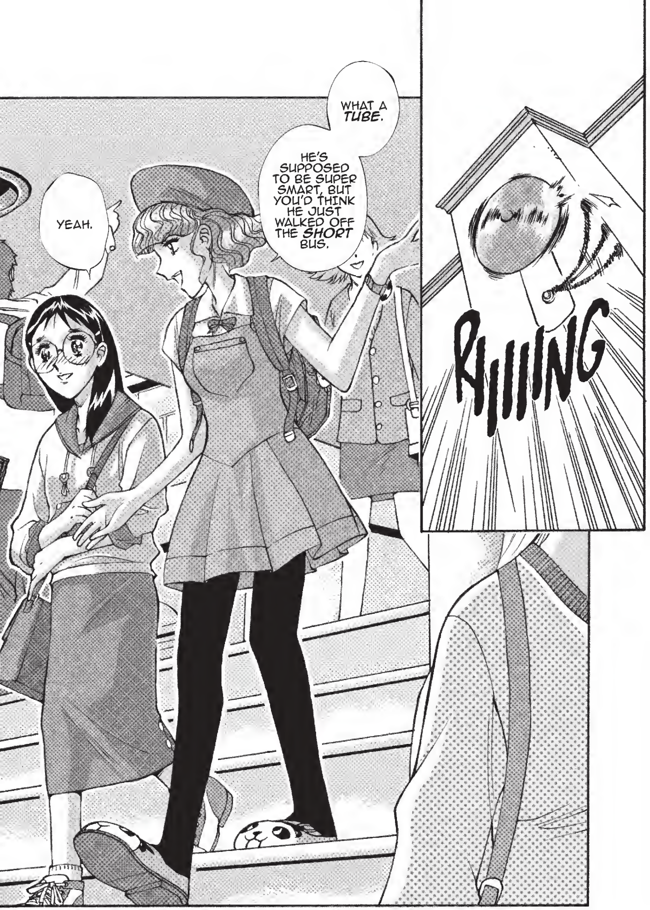

UP UNTIL THAT DAY, I DON'T THINK I'D EVER SO MUCH AS *LOOKED* AT HIM.
*TOOL*. HEH, YA GOT *THAT* RIGHT, DUDE.
-AND TOTALLY COMING OUT OF THE *WOODWORK* NOW...
Pride and Prejudice
JANE AUSTEN
AND I'M TOTALLY LIKE, *BLAM! BLAM!*
AND THEN I HAVE TO LEAP OVER ITS BODY, CUZ, YOU KNOW, THE *ACID BLOOD*-
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SHANE, BUT I'M NOT SURE YOU QUITE PICKED UP ON THE *SPIRIT* OF MR. CLARK'S BOOK.
ESSA RIBE YOUR
COUNT WITH VISIT
ROM OTHER WORL
UHHHHH... *BOOK?*

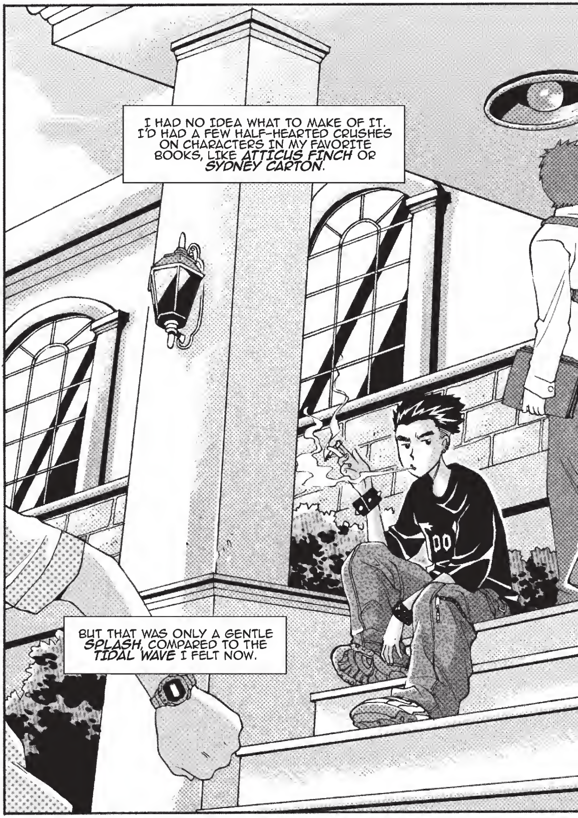

I DIDN'T LOOK AT *ANYONE*, REALLY.
I BARELY EVER NOTICED *NIKKI*, AND SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
IF ALIENS LANDED, I'D WARN THEM AWAY FROM PLANET *EARTH IMMEDIATELY*.
"NOT IN ALL THE GALAXY," I'D EXPLAIN, "WILL YOU FIND A WORLD AS UTTERLY *LAME* AND AS FULL OF PATHETIC *DWEEBS* AS *THIS* ONE."
I'D *BEG* THEM TO TAKE ME *AWAY* FROM THIS HORRIBLE PLANET, AND *SAVE* ME FROM DYING ALONE IN SOME PATHETIC *SUBURB* LIKE *PLEASANTON*, SURROUNDED BY SHRIVELED SOAP-OPERA ADDICTS...
VERY *NICE*, NIKKI. *SHORT*, BUT...
...TACTLESS.

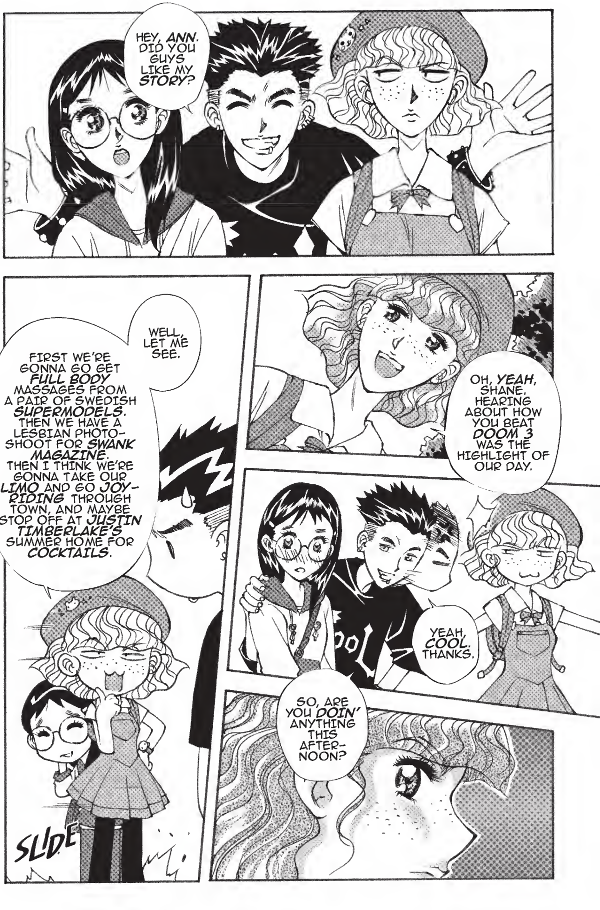

NO PROB.
JEM? READY?
UM, YEAH, OKAY.
HOW *WAS* I?
*OSCAR*-WORTHY.
REGARDLESS OF OUR SHORTCOMINGS, I THINK THAT WE HUMANS, AS A SPECIES, HAVE A LOT TO RECOMMEND US.
TAKE *ICE-SKATING*.
SNORT
OH, BROTHER.
I KNOW IT SOUNDS SILLY, BUT THINK ABOUT IT.
THE FIRST TIME AT THE SKATING RINK, EVERYBODY STRUGGLES TO STAY ON THEIR FEET. EVERYBODY NEEDS A LITTLE HELP, A LITTLE GUIDANCE.

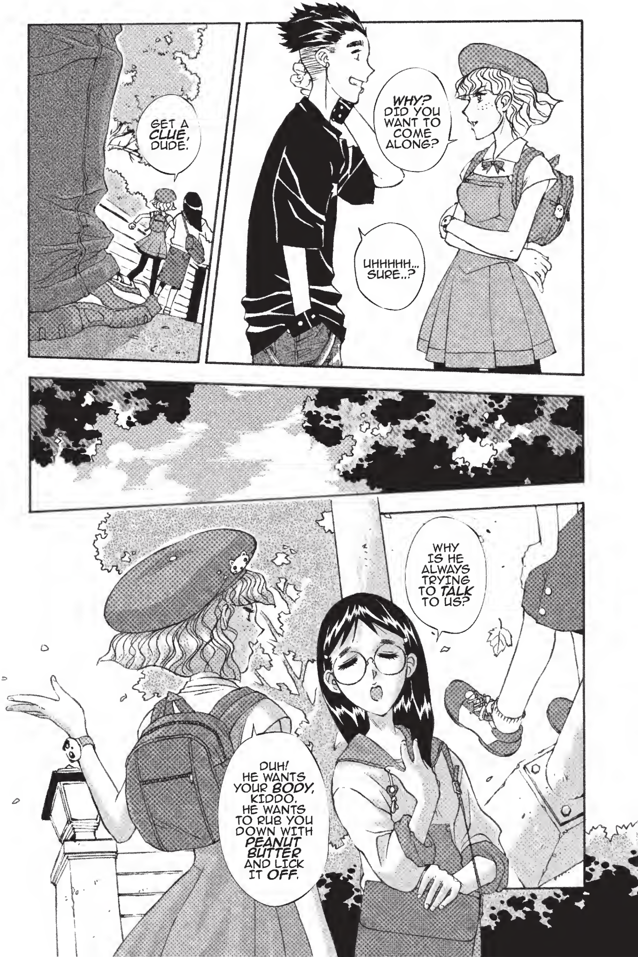

BUT WHEN YOU GET THE *HANG* OF IT, YOU JUST GLIDE OVER THE ICE LIKE *MAGIC*.
SOMETIMES I GO WITH MY *GRANDPARENTS*, WHO'VE BEEN SKATING TOGETHER FOR OVER *FIFTY YEARS*, AND SEEING THEM ZOOM ALONG ARM IN ARM...
...*THAT'S* WHAT BEING HUMAN IS ALL ABOUT.

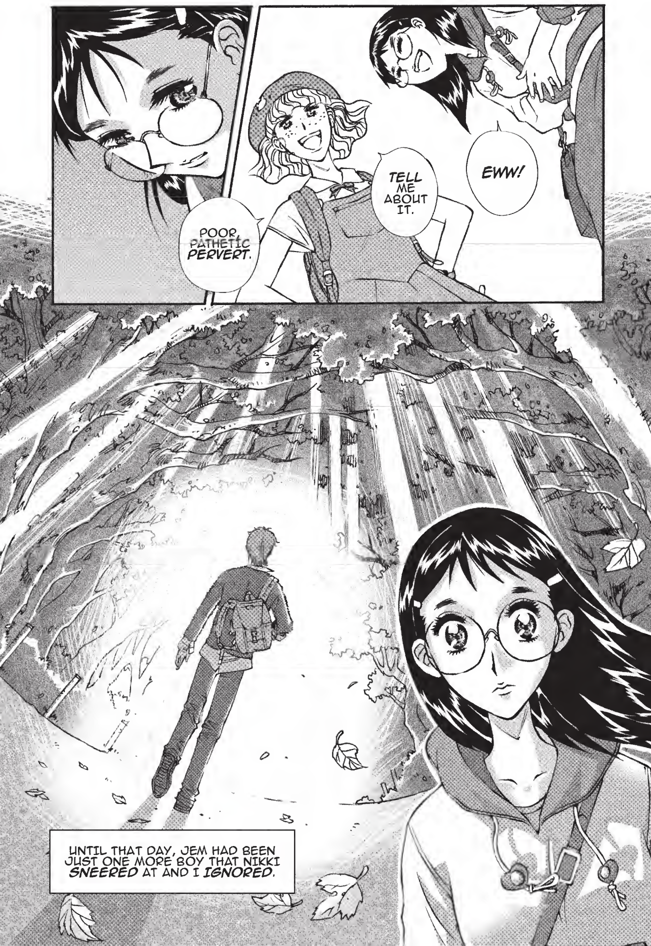

IF I EVER MET ALIENS, I'D TAKE THEM *ICE-SKATING*.
*PLUS*, MAYBE THEY'D BE FROM A *DESERT PLANET*, AND A FROZEN LAKE WOULD JUST BLOW THEIR *MINDS*.
*THANKS*, JEM. THAT WAS *LOVELY*.
CHOKE
GAKK
*BLEAH!*

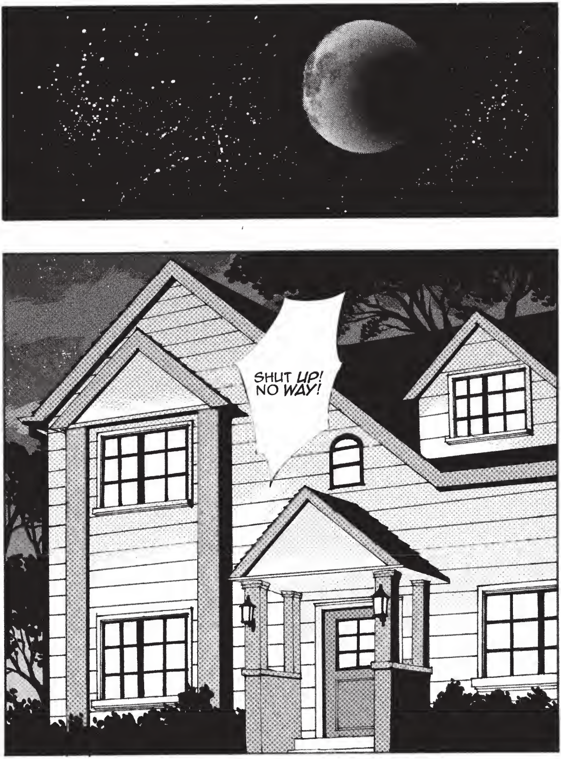

RIIIING
WHAT A *TUBE*.
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE SUPER SMART, BUT YOU'D THINK HE JUST WALKED OFF THE *SHORT* BUS.
YEAH.

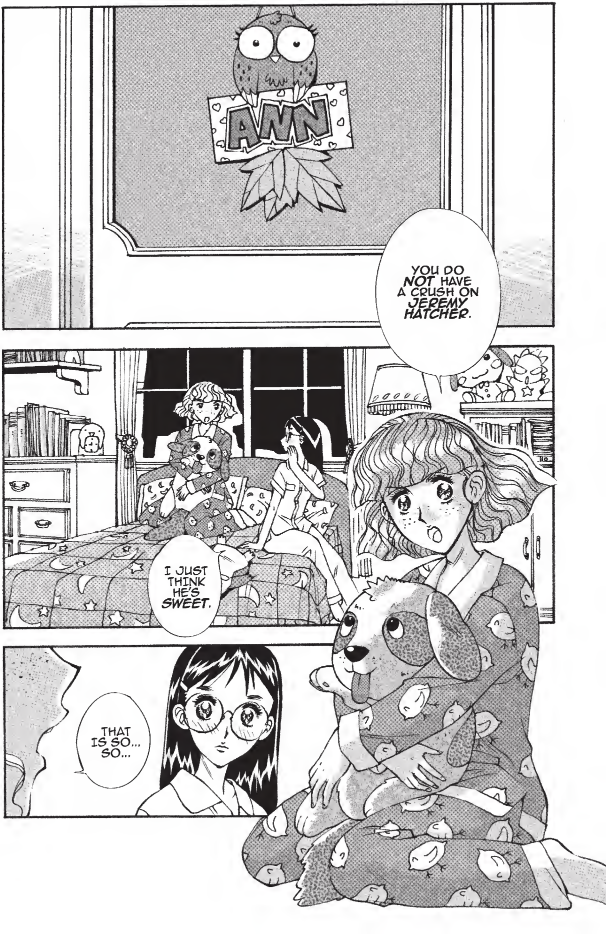

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO MAKE OF IT. I'D HAD A FEW HALF-HEARTED CRUSHES ON CHARACTERS IN MY FAVORITE BOOKS, LIKE *ATTICUS FINCH* OR *SYDNEY CARTON*.
BUT THAT WAS ONLY A GENTLE *SPLASH*, COMPARED TO THE *TIDAL WAVE* I FELT NOW.

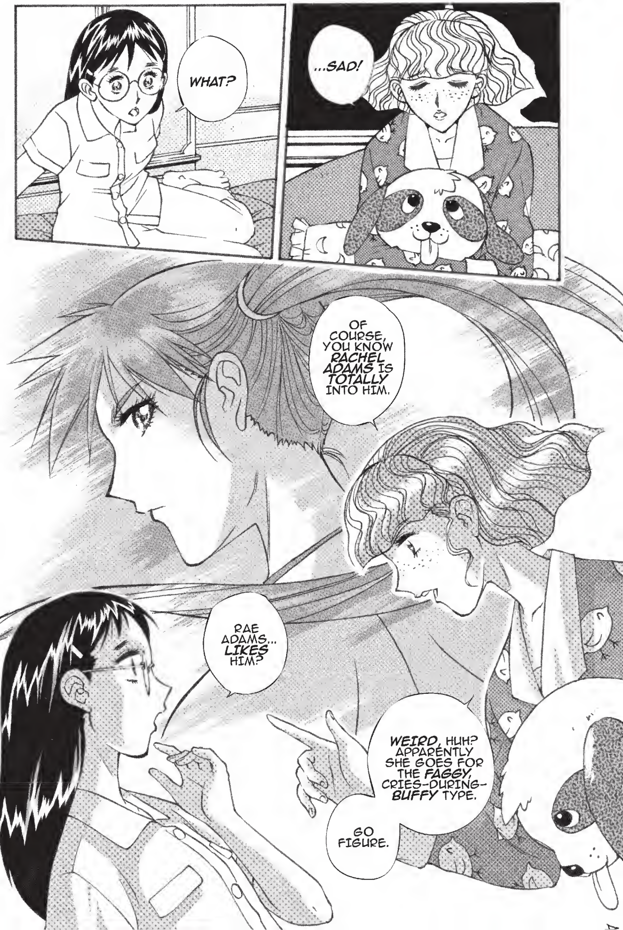

HEY, *ANN*. DID YOU GUYS LIKE MY *STORY*?
OH, *YEAH*, SHANE. HEARING ABOUT HOW YOU BEAT *DOOM 3* WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF OUR DAY.
YEAH, *COOL*. THANKS.
SO, ARE YOU *DOIN'* ANYTHING THIS AFTERNOON?
WELL, LET ME SEE.
FIRST WE'RE GONNA GO GET *FULL BODY* MASSAGES FROM A PAIR OF SWEDISH *SUPERMODELS*. THEN WE HAVE A LESBIAN PHOTO-SHOOT FOR *SWANK MAGAZINE*. THEN I THINK WE'RE GONNA TAKE OUR *LIMO* AND GO *JOY-RIDING* THROUGH TOWN, AND MAYBE STOP OFF AT *JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE'S* SUMMER HOME FOR *COCKTAILS*.
SLIDE

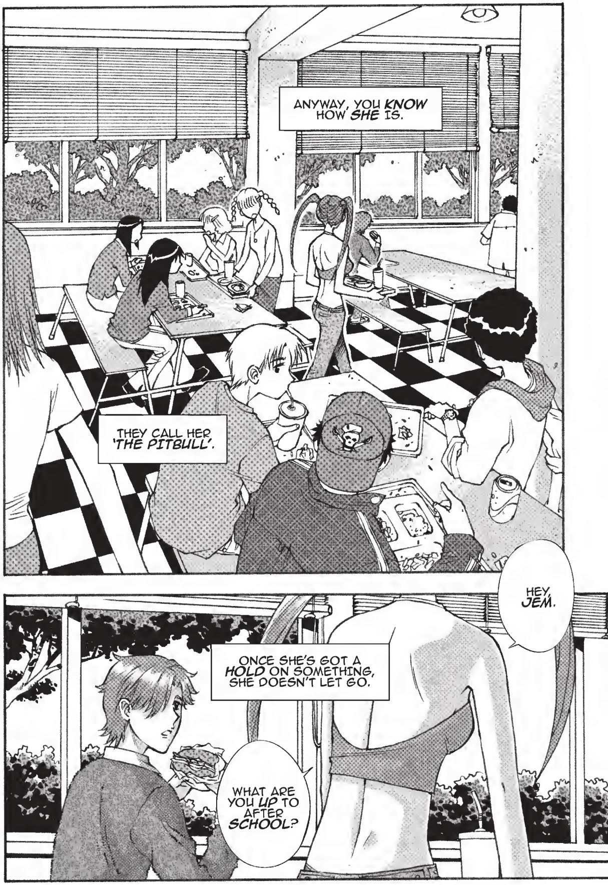

*WHY?* DID YOU WANT TO COME ALONG?
UHHHHH... SURE..?
GET A *CLUE,* DUDE.
WHY IS HE ALWAYS TRYING TO *TALK* TO US?
DUH! HE WANTS YOUR *BODY,* KIDDO. HE WANTS TO RUB YOU DOWN WITH *PEANUT BUTTER* AND LICK IT *OFF*.

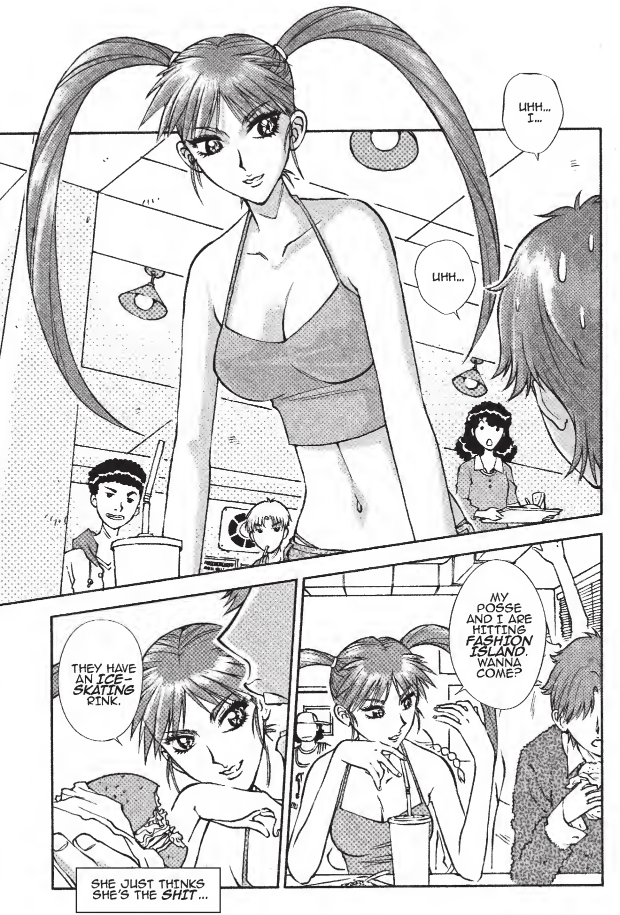

POOR, PATHETIC *PERVERT*.
*TELL* ME ABOUT IT.
*EWW!*
UNTIL THAT DAY, JEM HAD BEEN JUST ONE MORE BOY THAT NIKKI *SNEERED* AT AND I *IGNORED*.

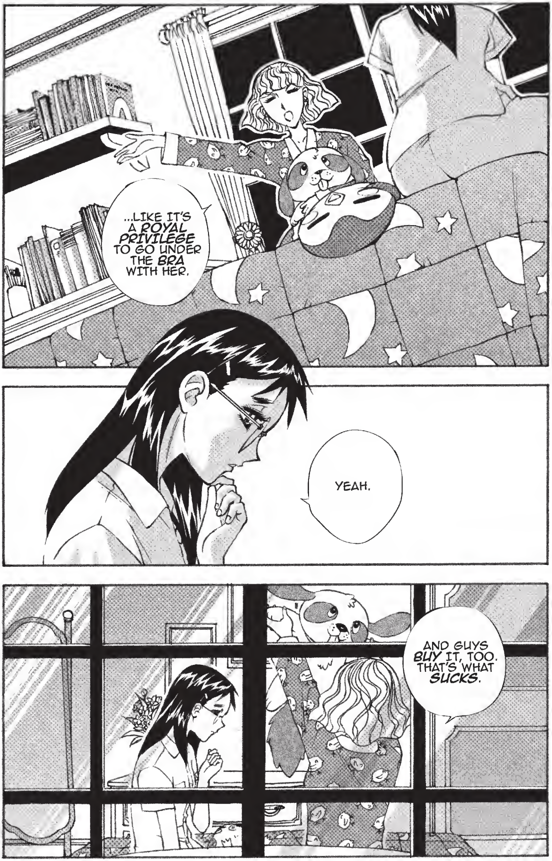

SHUT *UP!* NO *WAY!*

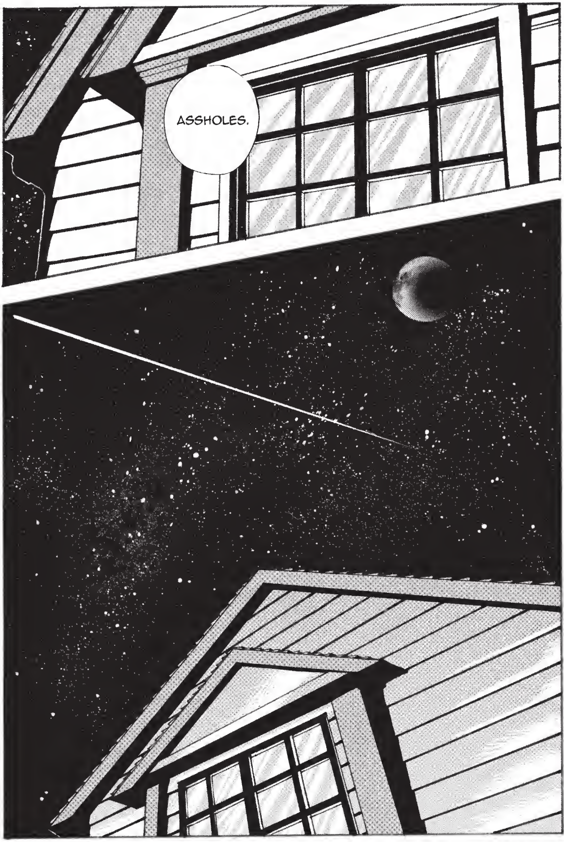

ANN
YOU DO NOT HAVE A CRUSH ON JEREMY HATCHER.
I JUST THINK HE'S SWEET.
THAT IS SO... SO...

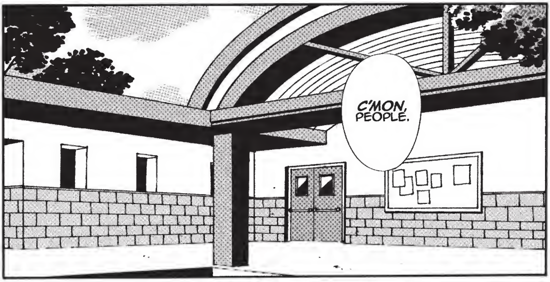

WHAT?
...SAD!
OF COURSE, YOU KNOW *RACHEL ADAMS* IS *TOTALLY* INTO HIM.
RAE ADAMS... *LIKES* HIM?
*WEIRD*, HUH? APPARENTLY SHE GOES FOR THE *FAGGY*, CRIES-DURING-*BUFFY* TYPE.
GO FIGURE.

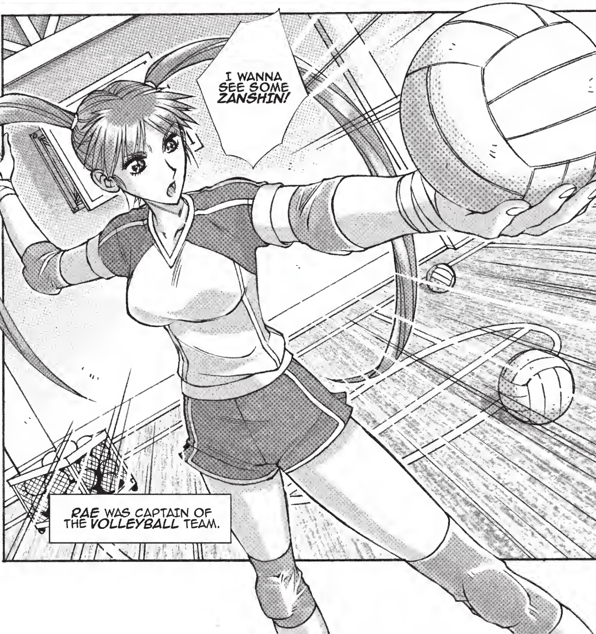

ANYWAY, YOU *KNOW* HOW *SHE* IS.
THEY CALL HER *'THE PITBULL'*.
HEY, *JEM*.
ONCE SHE'S GOT A *HOLD* ON SOMETHING, SHE DOESN'T LET GO.
WHAT ARE YOU *UP* TO AFTER *SCHOOL*?

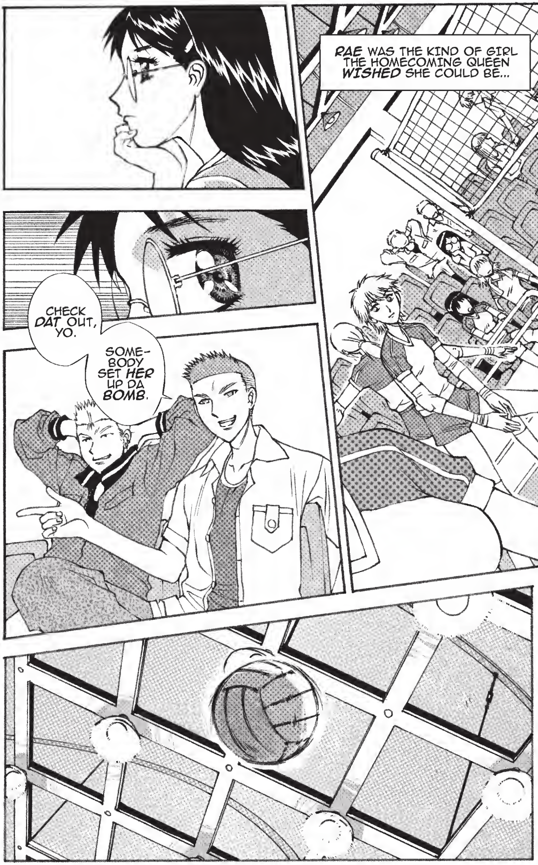

UHH... I...
UHH...
MY POSSE AND I ARE HITTING *FASHION ISLAND*. WANNA COME?
THEY HAVE AN *ICE-SKATING* RINK.
SHE JUST THINKS SHE'S THE *SHIT*...

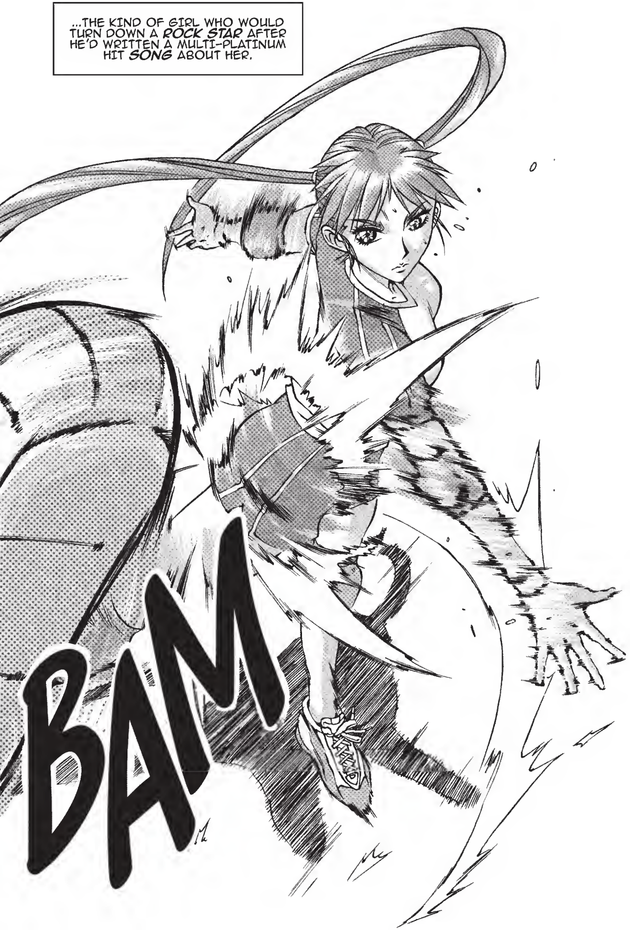

...LIKE IT'S A ROYAL PRIVILEGE TO GO UNDER THE BRA WITH HER.
YEAH.
AND GUYS BUY IT, TOO. THAT'S WHAT SUCKS.

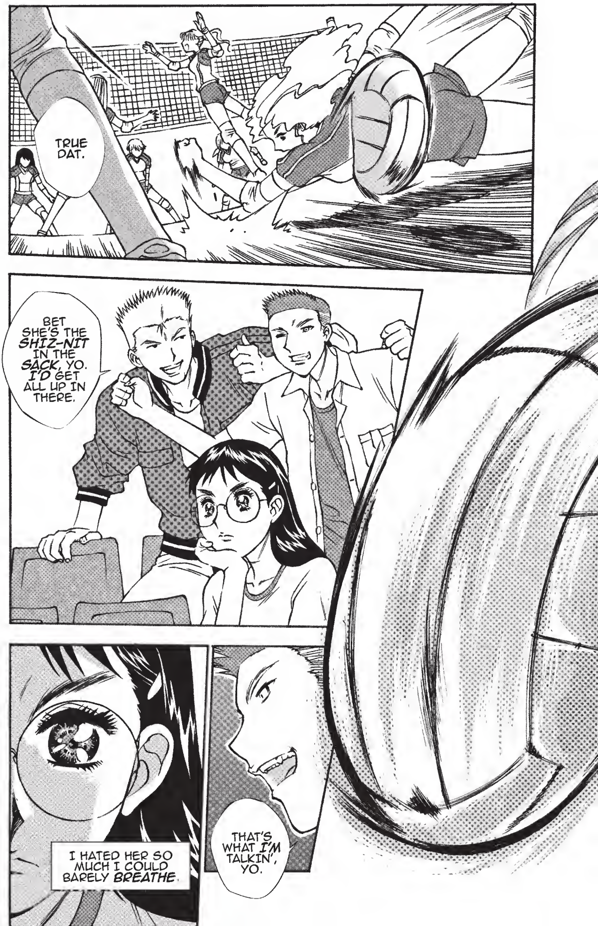

ASSHOLES.

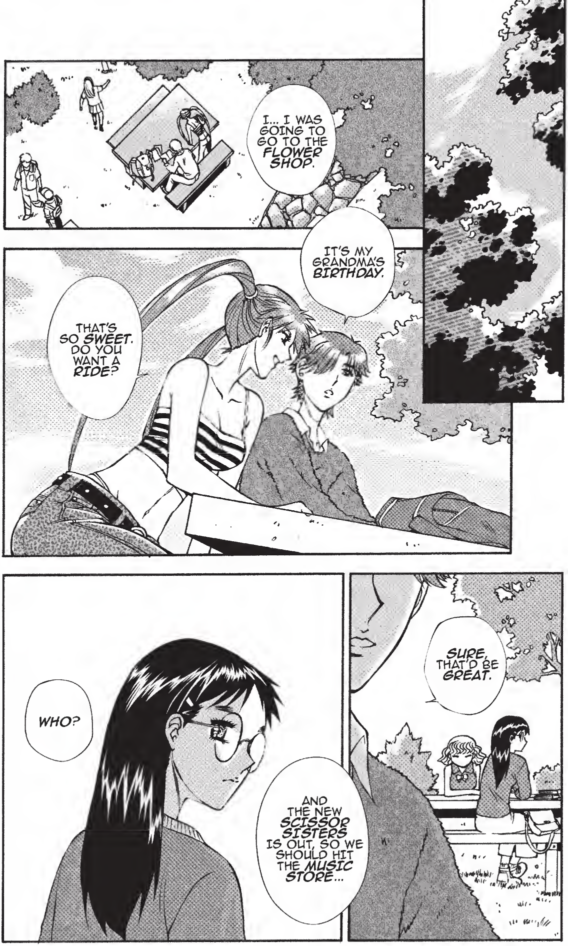

C'MON, PEOPLE.

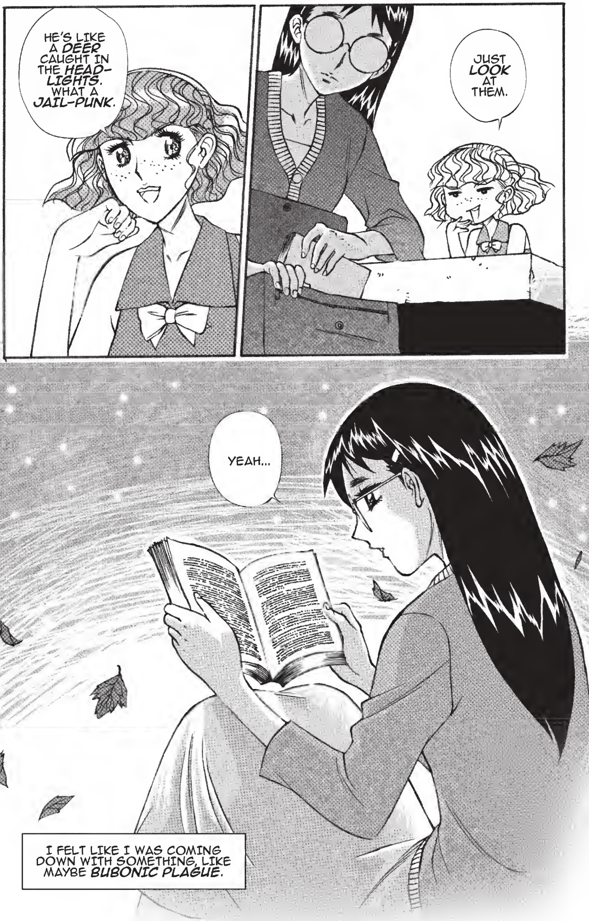

I WANNA SEE SOME ZANSHIN!
RAE WAS CAPTAIN OF THE VOLLEYBALL TEAM.

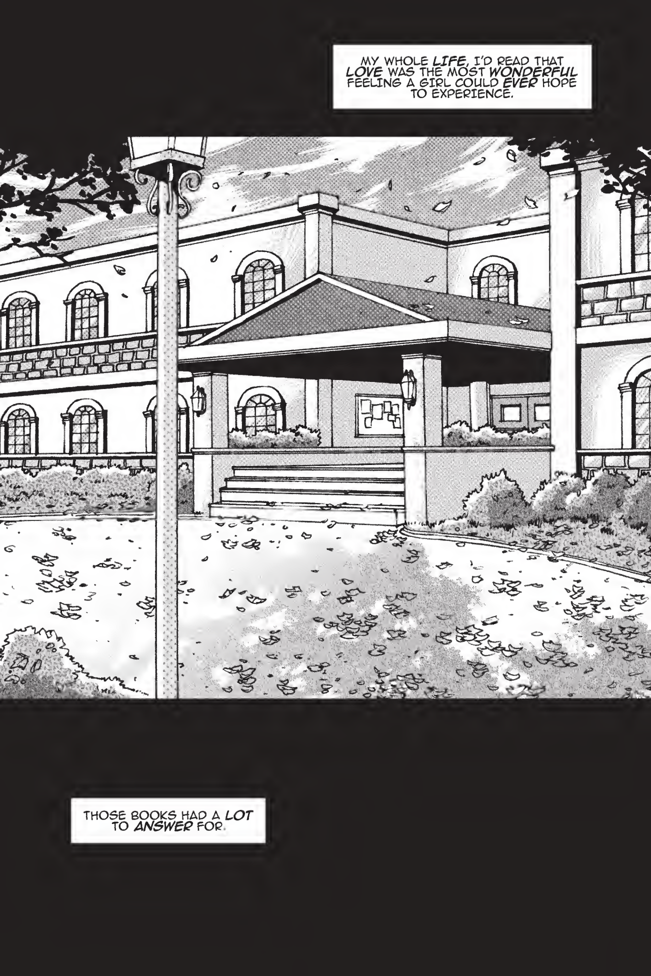

RAE WAS THE KIND OF GIRL THE HOMECOMING QUEEN WISHED SHE COULD BE...
CHECK DAT OUT, YO.
SOME-BODY SET HER UP DA BOMB.

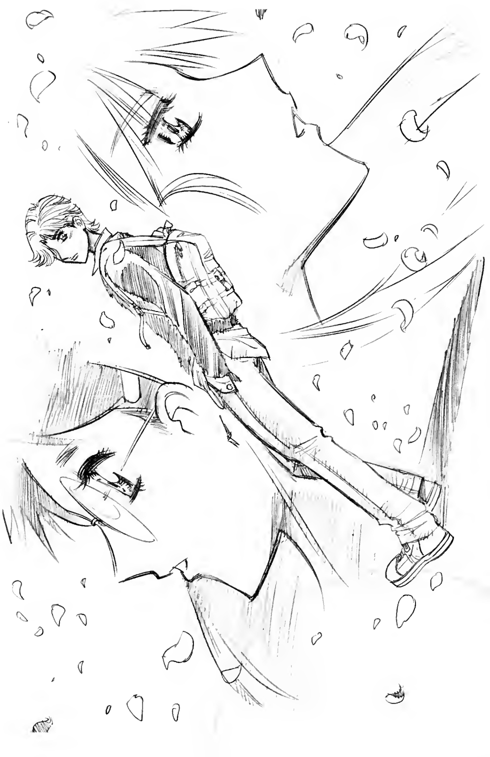

...THE KIND OF GIRL WHO WOULD TURN DOWN A ***ROCK STAR*** AFTER HE'D WRITTEN A MULTI-PLATINUM HIT ***SONG*** ABOUT HER.
BAM


TRUE DAT.
BET SHE'S THE *SHIZ-NIT* IN THE *SACK*, YO. *I'D* GET ALL UP IN THERE.
THAT'S WHAT *I'M* TALKIN', YO.
I HATED HER SO MUCH I COULD BARELY *BREATHE*.

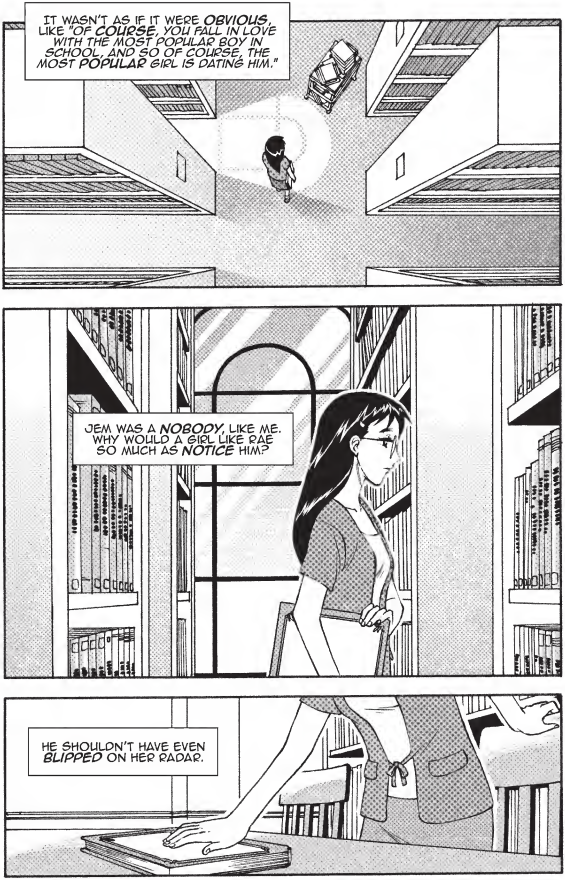

I... I WAS GOING TO GO TO THE *FLOWER SHOP*.
IT'S MY GRANDMA'S *BIRTHDAY*.
THAT'S SO *SWEET*. DO YOU WANT A *RIDE*?
*SURE*, THAT'D BE *GREAT*.
AND THE NEW *SCISSOR SISTERS* IS OUT, SO WE SHOULD HIT THE *MUSIC STORE*...
*WHO?*

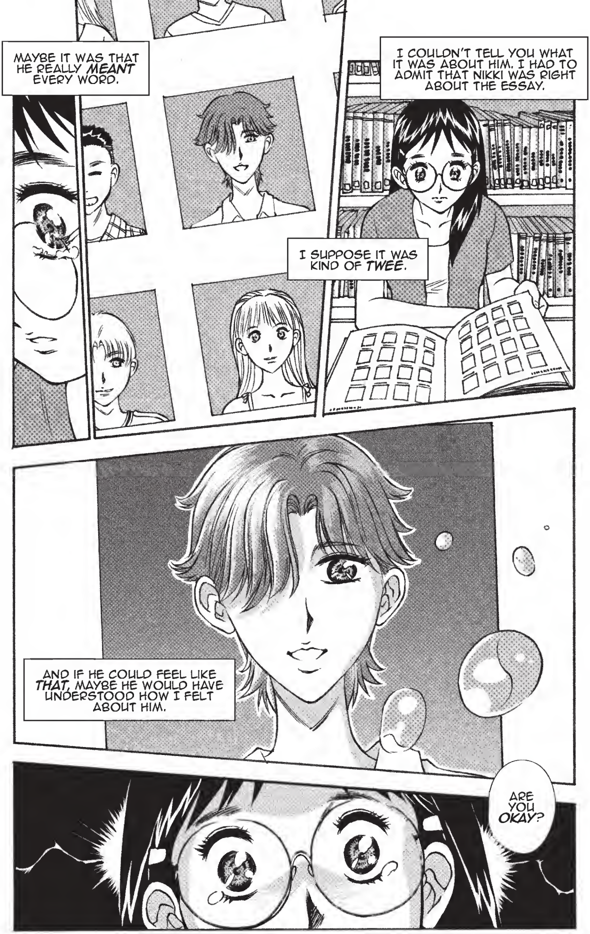

HE'S LIKE A DEER CAUGHT IN THE HEADLIGHTS. WHAT A JAIL-PUNK.
JUST LOOK AT THEM.
YEAH...
I FELT LIKE I WAS COMING DOWN WITH SOMETHING, LIKE MAYBE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

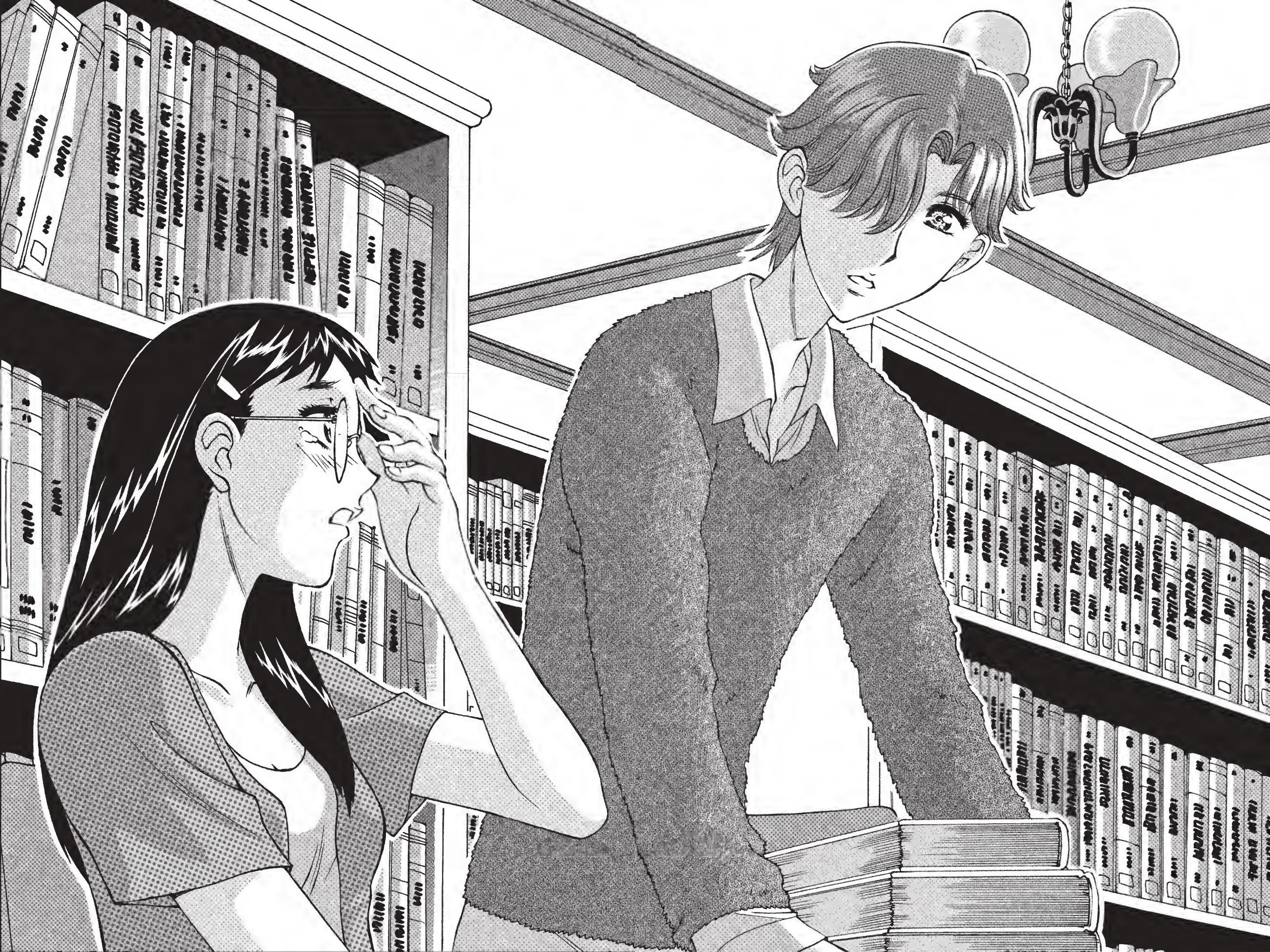

MY WHOLE ***LIFE***, I'D READ THAT ***LOVE*** WAS THE MOST ***WONDERFUL*** FEELING A GIRL COULD ***EVER*** HOPE TO EXPERIENCE.
THOSE BOOKS HAD A ***LOT*** TO ***ANSWER*** FOR.

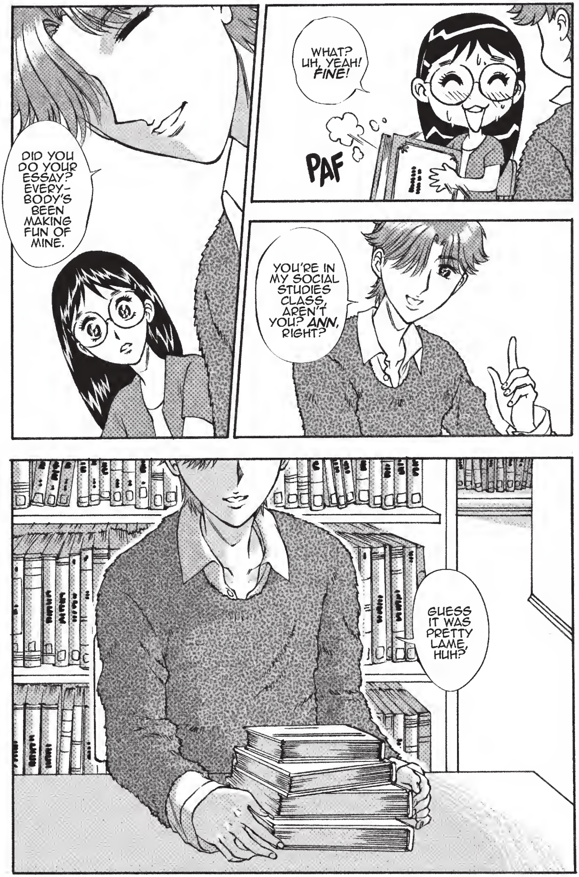


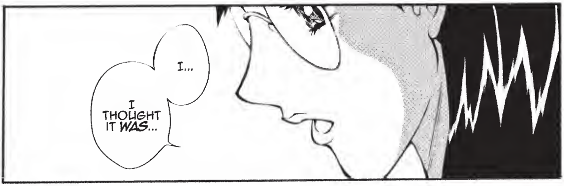
# UNEARTHLY chapter 2

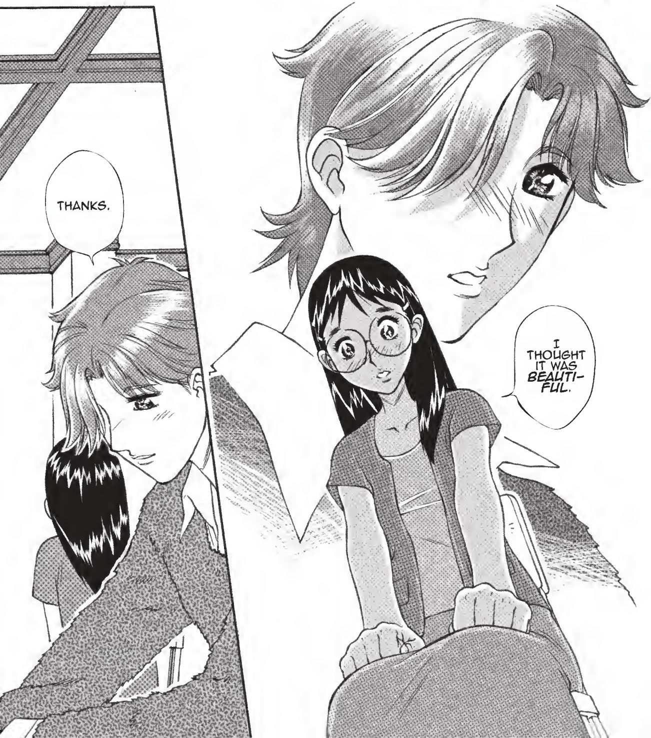

IT WASN'T AS IF IT WERE *OBVIOUS*, LIKE "OF **COURSE**, YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MOST POPULAR BOY IN SCHOOL, AND SO OF COURSE, THE MOST **POPULAR** GIRL IS DATING HIM."
JEM WAS A ***NOBODY***, LIKE ME. WHY WOULD A GIRL LIKE RAE SO MUCH AS ***NOTICE*** HIM?
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE EVEN *BLIPPED* ON HER RADAR.

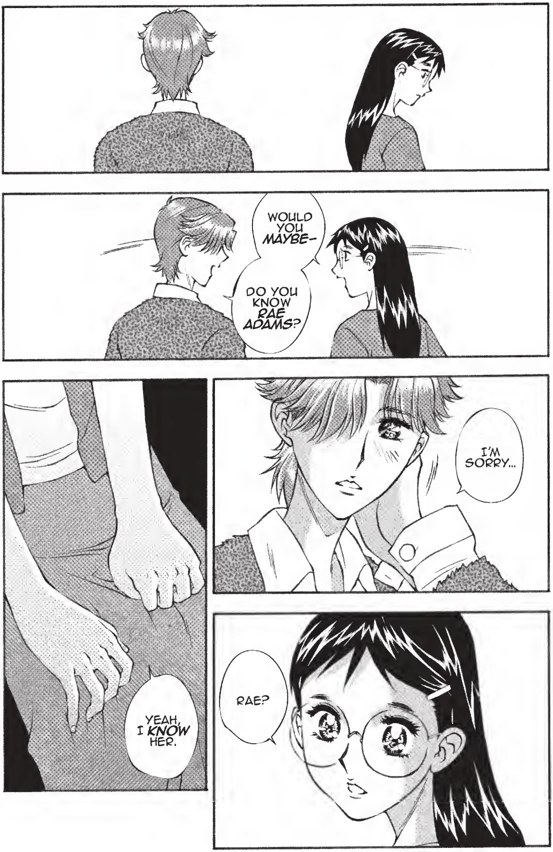

I COULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT IT WAS ABOUT HIM. I HAD TO ADMIT THAT NIKKI WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE ESSAY.
I SUPPOSE IT WAS KIND OF *TWEE*.
MAYBE IT WAS THAT HE REALLY *MEANT* EVERY WORD.
AND IF HE COULD FEEL LIKE *THAT*, MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD HOW I FELT ABOUT HIM.
ARE YOU *OKAY*?

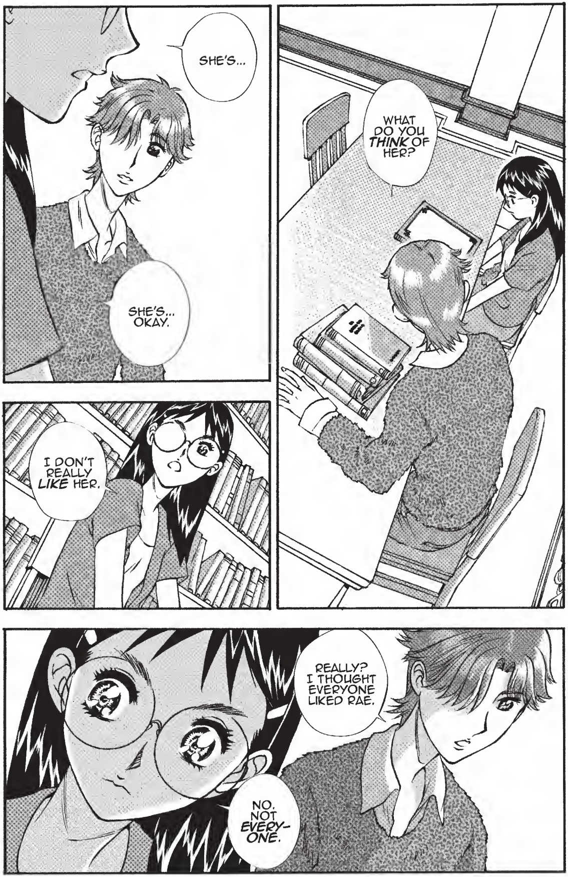


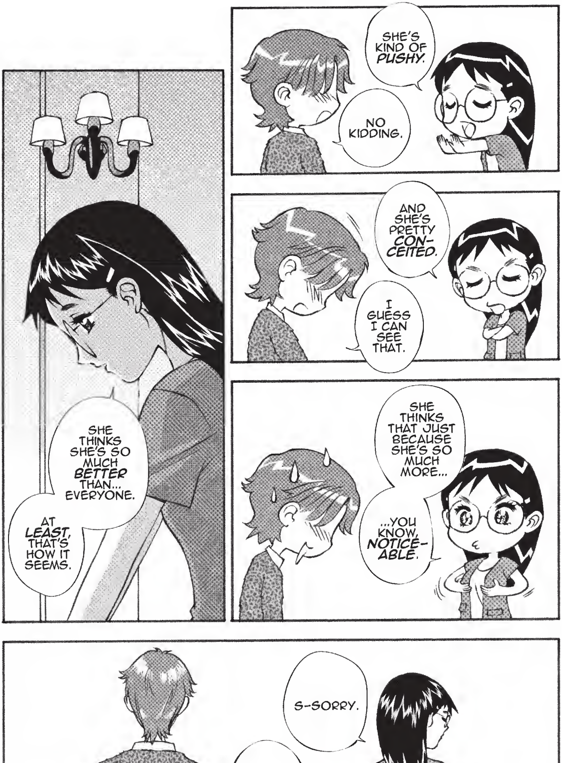

WHAT? UH, YEAH! *FINE!*
PAF
YOU'RE IN MY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS, AREN'T YOU? *ANN*, RIGHT?
DID YOU DO YOUR ESSAY? EVERYBODY'S BEEN MAKING FUN OF MINE.
GUESS IT WAS PRETTY LAME, HUH?

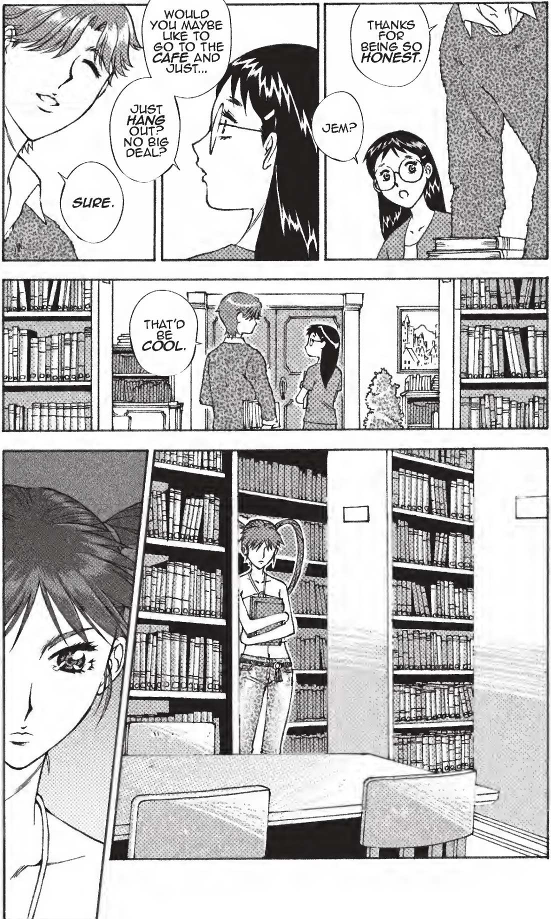

I...
I THOUGHT IT *WAS*...

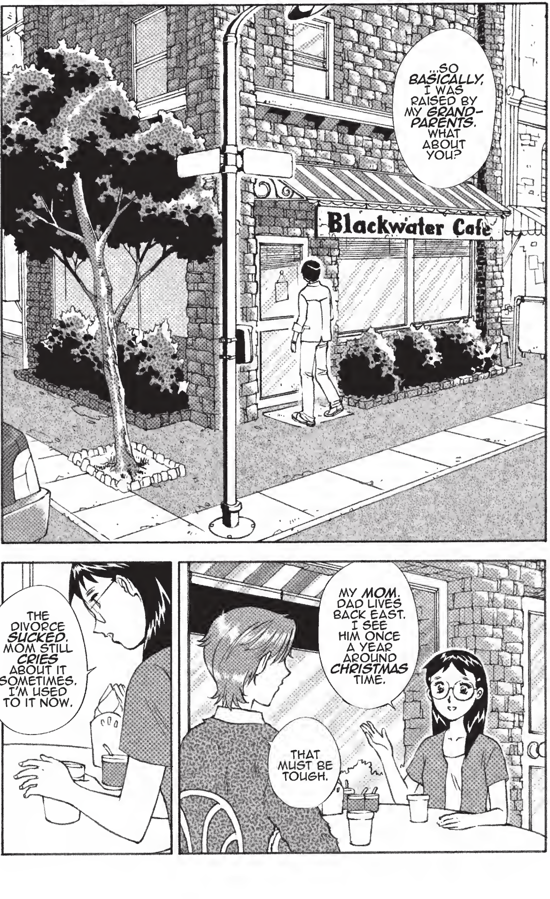

I THOUGHT IT WAS *BEAUTIFUL*.
THANKS.

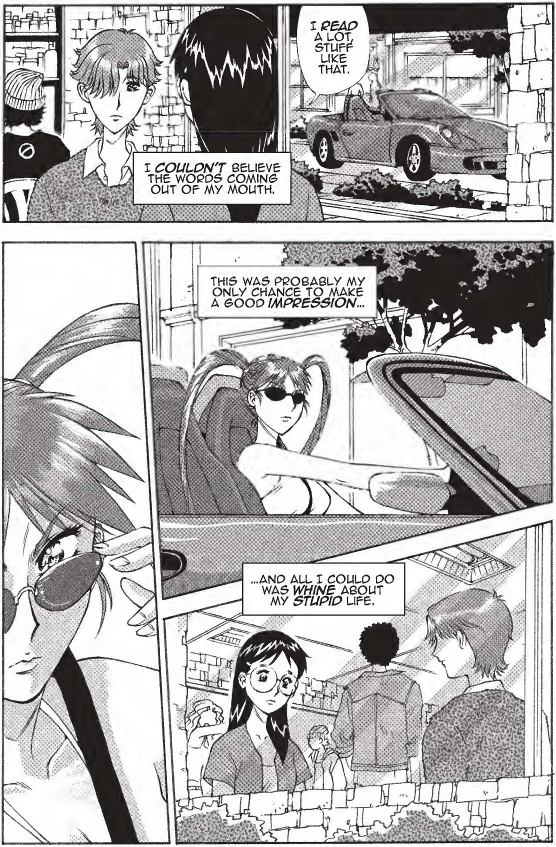

WOULD YOU *MAYBE*-
DO YOU KNOW *RAE ADAMS*?
I'M SORRY...
RAE?
YEAH, I ***KNOW*** HER.

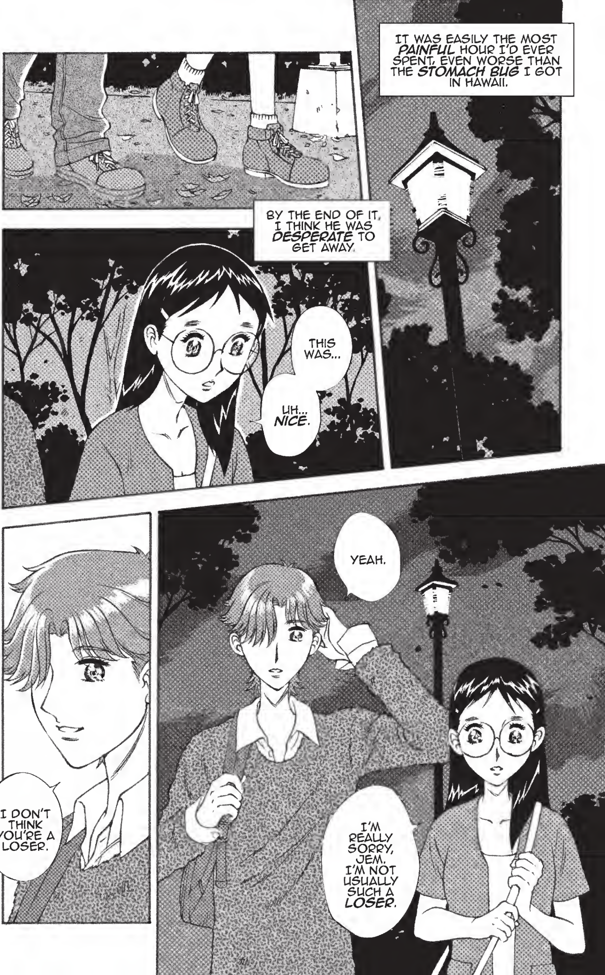

SHE'S...
SHE'S... OKAY.
WHAT DO YOU *THINK* OF HER?
I DON'T REALLY *LIKE* HER.
REALLY? I THOUGHT EVERYONE LIKED RAE.
NO. NOT *EVERYONE*.

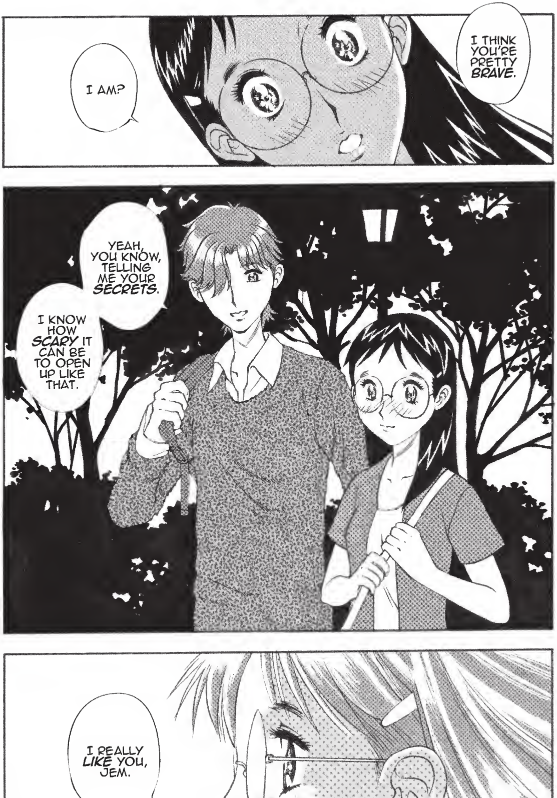

SHE'S KIND OF *PUSHY*.
NO KIDDING.
AND SHE'S PRETTY *CONCEITED*.
I GUESS I CAN SEE THAT.
SHE THINKS THAT JUST BECAUSE SHE'S SO MUCH MORE...
...YOU KNOW, *NOTICEABLE*.
SHE THINKS SHE'S SO MUCH *BETTER* THAN... EVERYONE.
AT *LEAST*, THAT'S HOW IT SEEMS.
S-SORRY.
NO, IT'S COOL.

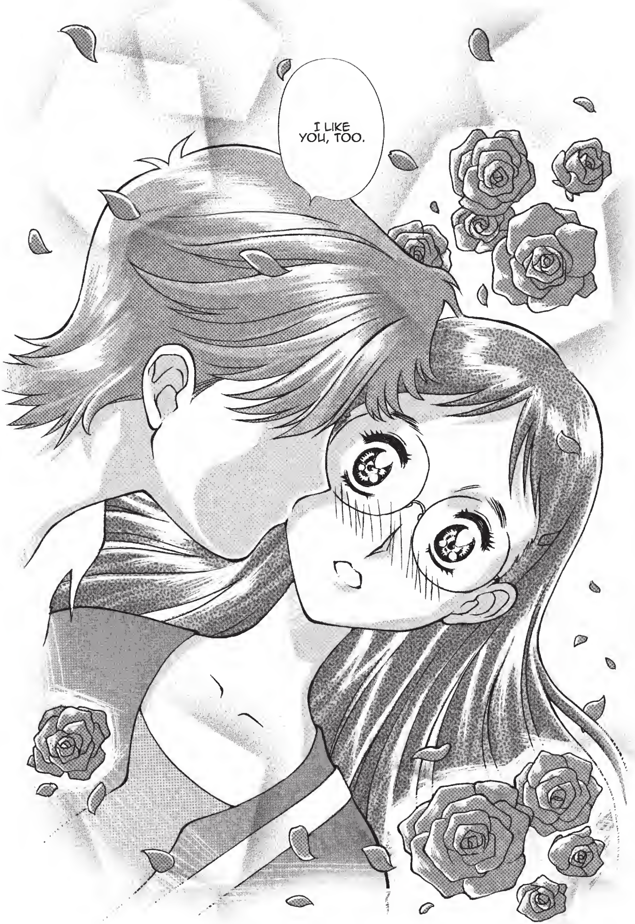

WOULD YOU MAYBE LIKE TO GO TO THE *CAFE* AND JUST...
JUST *HANG* OUT? NO BIG DEAL?
*SURE.*
THANKS FOR BEING SO *HONEST.*
JEM?
THAT'D BE *COOL.*

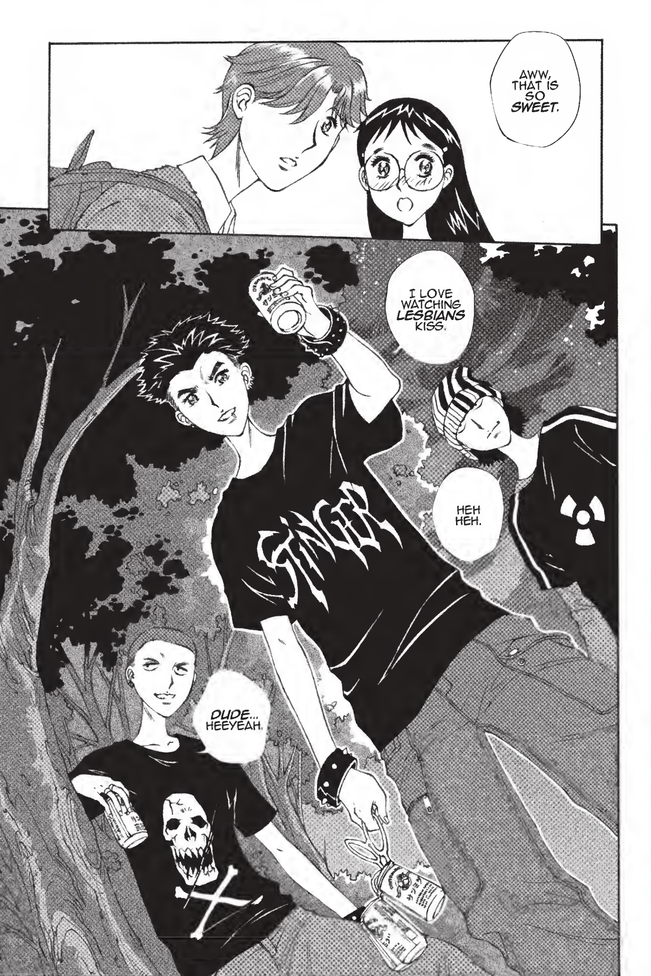

...SO *BASICALLY*, I WAS RAISED BY MY *GRANDPARENTS*. WHAT ABOUT YOU?
Blackwater Cafe
MY *MOM*. DAD LIVES BACK EAST. I SEE HIM ONCE A YEAR AROUND *CHRISTMAS* TIME.
THAT MUST BE TOUGH.
THE DIVORCE *SUCKED*. MOM STILL *CRIES* ABOUT IT SOMETIMES. I'M USED TO IT NOW.

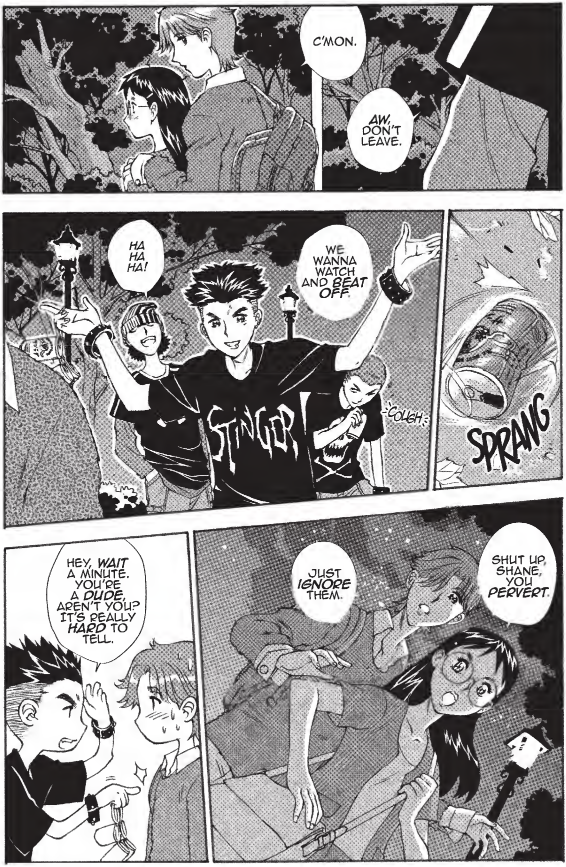

I READ A LOT, STUFF LIKE THAT.
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THE WORDS COMING OUT OF MY MOUTH.
THIS WAS PROBABLY MY ONLY CHANCE TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION...
...AND ALL I COULD DO WAS WHINE ABOUT MY STUPID LIFE.

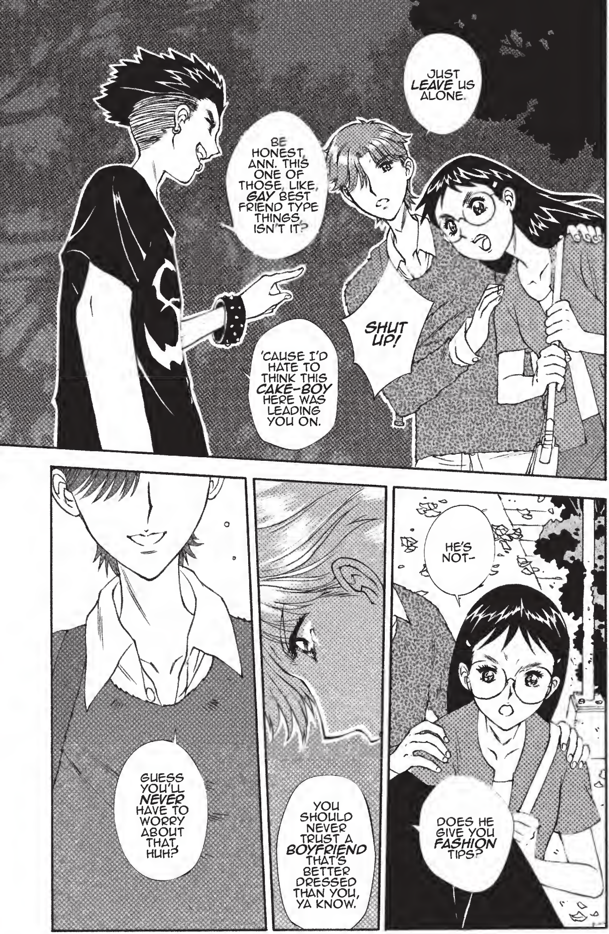

IT WAS EASILY THE MOST *PAINFUL* HOUR I'D EVER SPENT, EVEN WORSE THAN THE *STOMACH BUG* I GOT IN HAWAII.
BY THE END OF IT, I THINK HE WAS *DESPERATE* TO GET AWAY.
THIS WAS...
UH... *NICE*.
YEAH.
I'M REALLY SORRY, JEM. I'M NOT USUALLY SUCH A *LOSER*.
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE A LOSER.

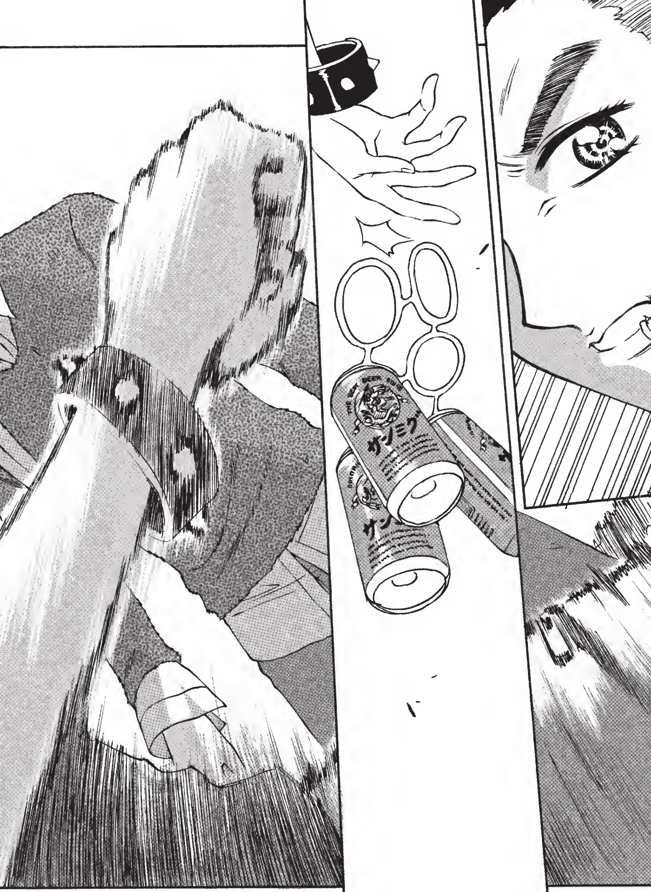

I THINK YOU'RE PRETTY *BRAVE*.
I AM?
YEAH, YOU KNOW, TELLING ME YOUR *SECRETS*.
I KNOW HOW *SCARY* IT CAN BE TO OPEN UP LIKE THAT.
I REALLY *LIKE* YOU, JEM.

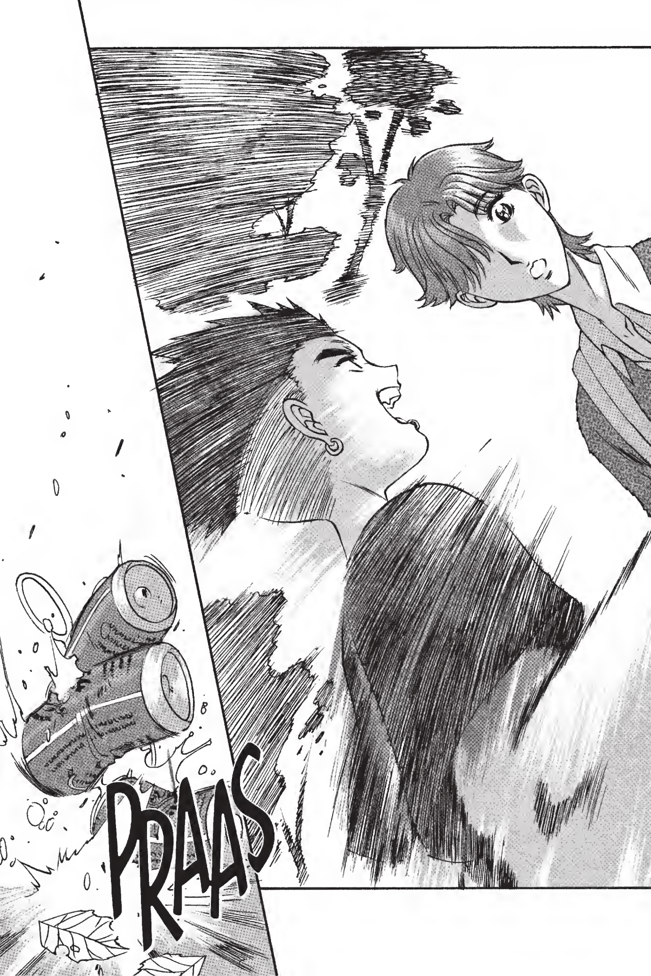

I LIKE YOU, TOO.

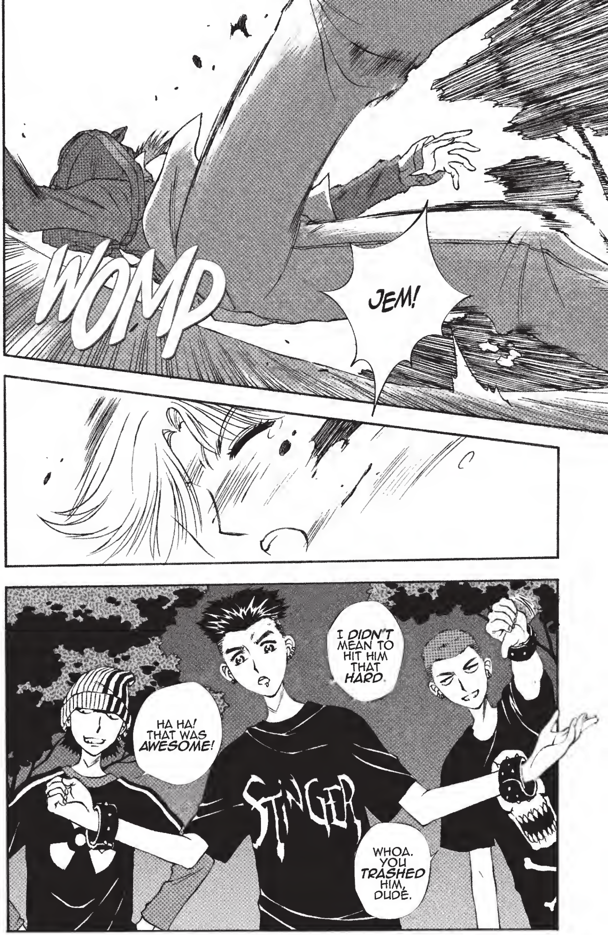

AWW, THAT IS SO *SWEET*.
I LOVE WATCHING **LESBIANS** KISS.
HEH HEH.
*DUDE*... HEEYEAH.

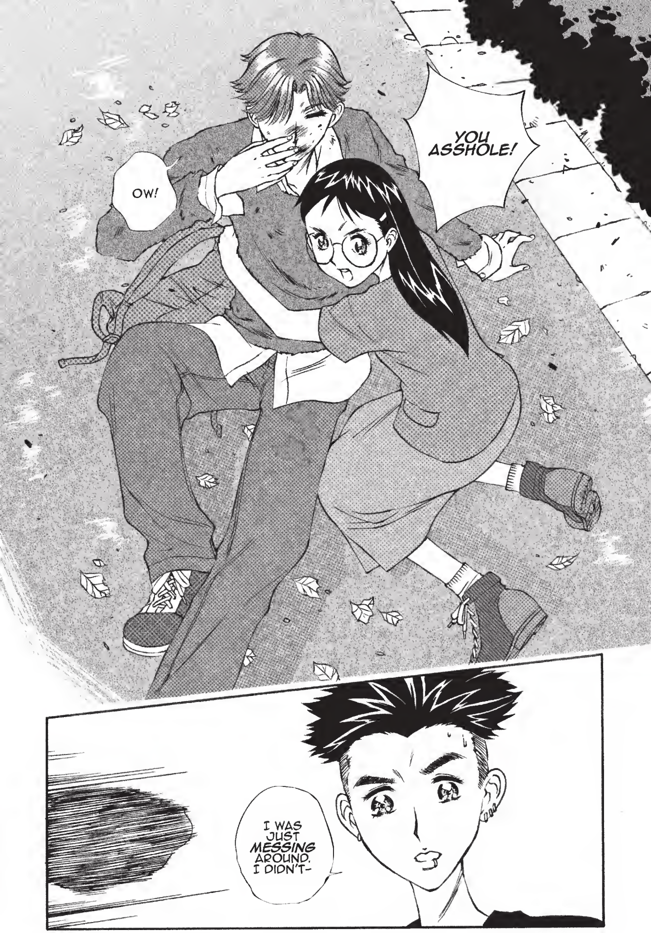

C'MON.
*AW,* DON'T LEAVE.
HA HA HA!
WE WANNA WATCH AND *BEAT OFF.*
STINGER
COUGH
SPRANG
HEY, *WAIT* A MINUTE. YOU'RE A *DUDE,* AREN'T YOU? IT'S REALLY *HARD* TO TELL.
JUST *IGNORE* THEM.
SHUT UP, SHANE, YOU *PERVERT.*

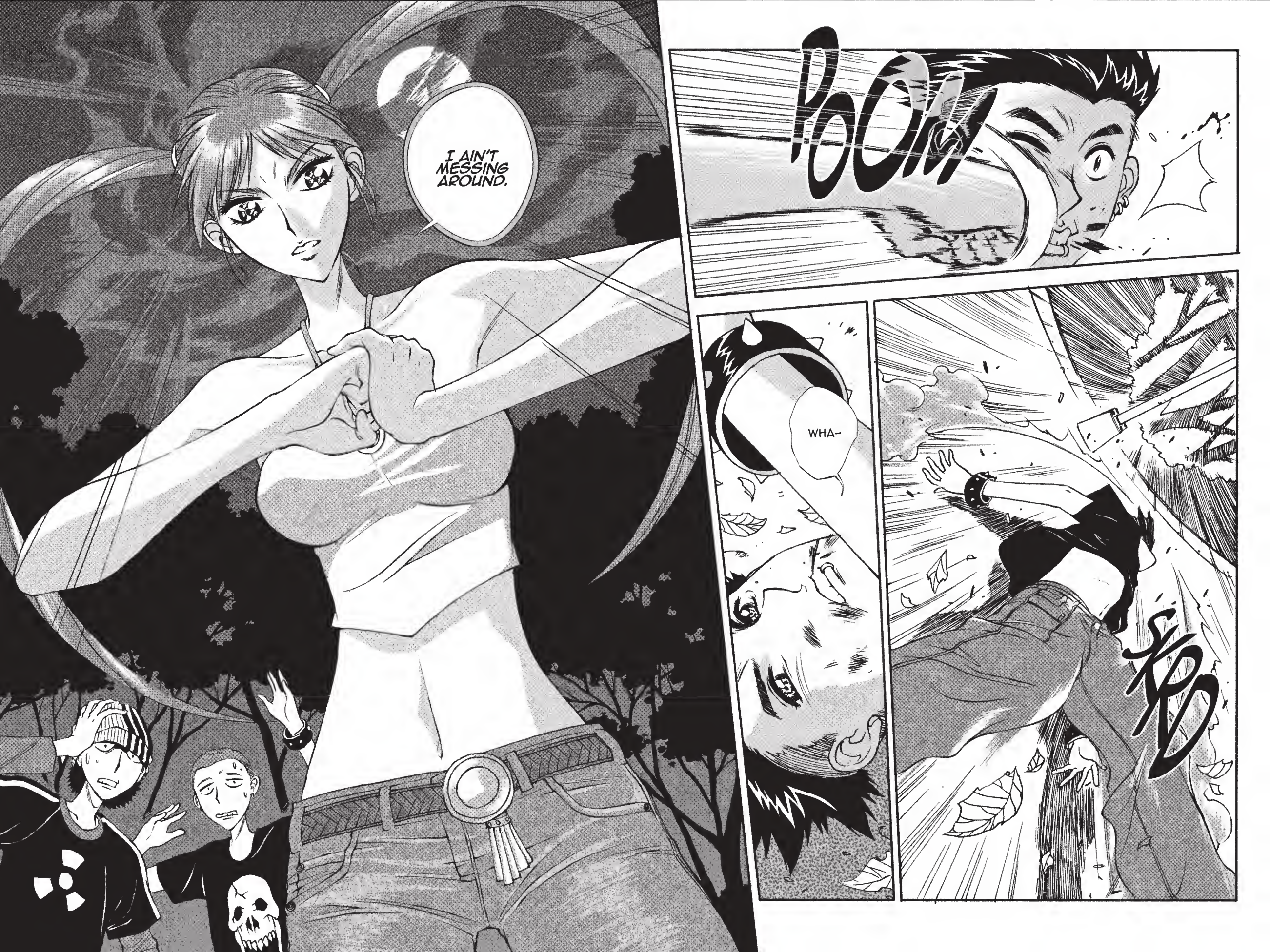

JUST *LEAVE* US ALONE.
BE HONEST, ANN. THIS ONE OF THOSE, LIKE, *GAY* BEST FRIEND TYPE THINGS, ISN'T IT?
*SHUT UP!*
'CAUSE I'D HATE TO THINK THIS *CAKE-BOY* HERE WAS LEADING YOU ON.
HE'S NOT-
DOES HE GIVE YOU *FASHION* TIPS?
YOU SHOULD NEVER TRUST A *BOYFRIEND* THAT'S BETTER DRESSED THAN YOU, YA KNOW.
GUESS YOU'LL *NEVER* HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT, HUH?

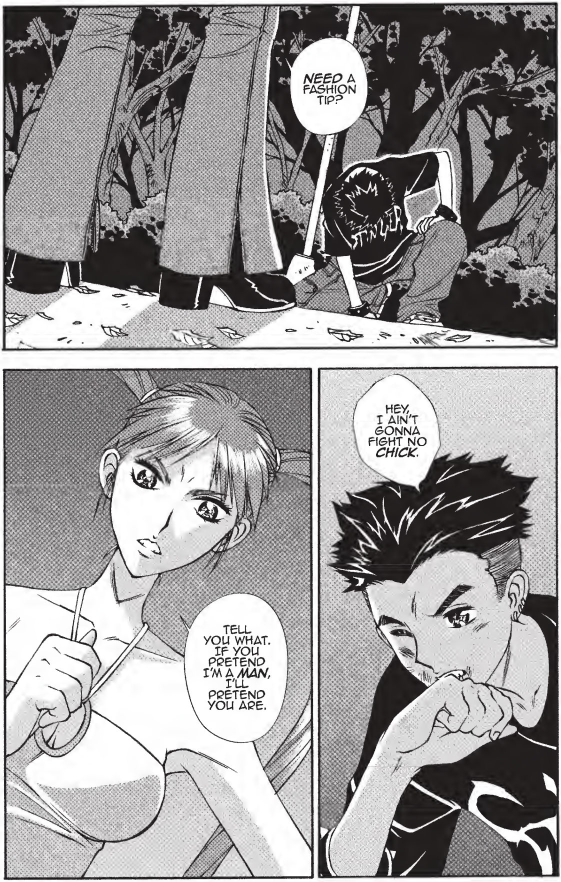

THE BEST BEER
サンミグ
サン

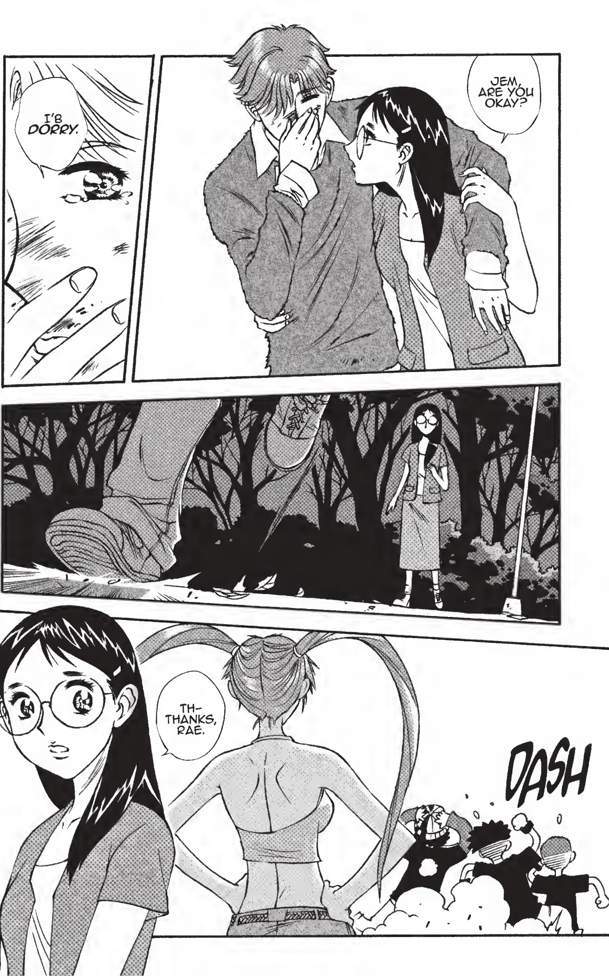

PRAAS

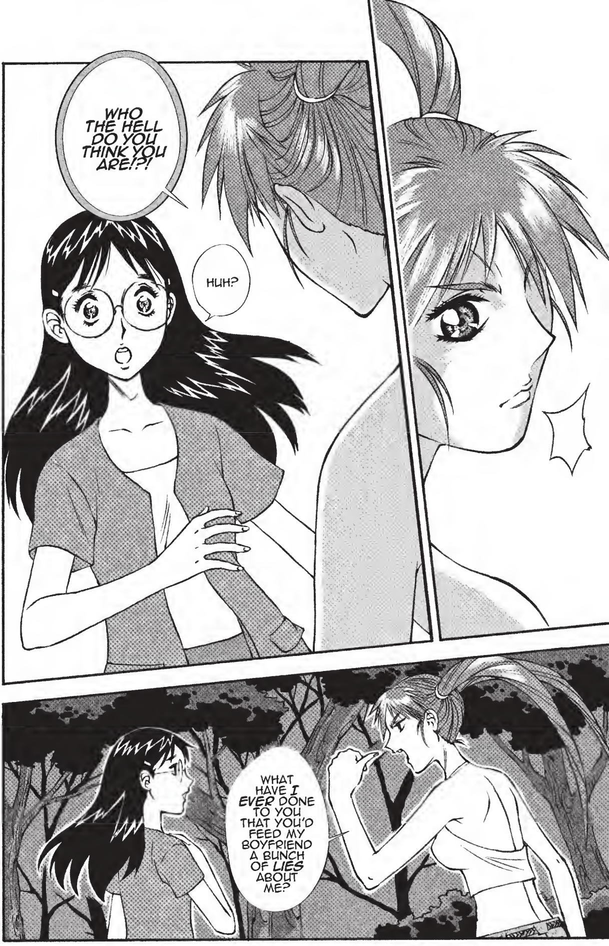

WOMP
JEM!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO HIT HIM THAT HARD.
HA HA! THAT WAS AWESOME!
STINGER
WHOA. YOU TRASHED HIM, DUDE.

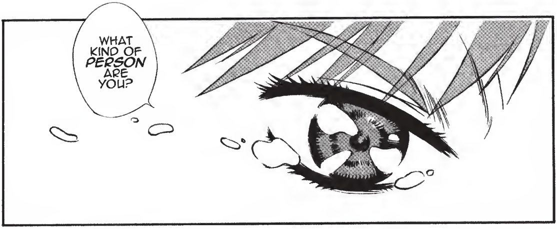

YOU ASSHOLE!
OW!
I WAS JUST *MESSING* AROUND. I DIDN'T-

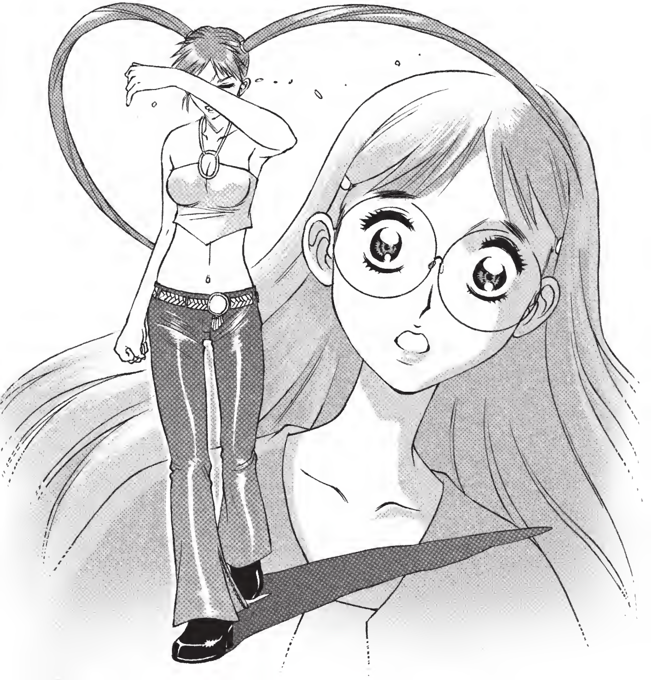

I AIN'T MESSING AROUND.
POOM
WHA-
SKRD

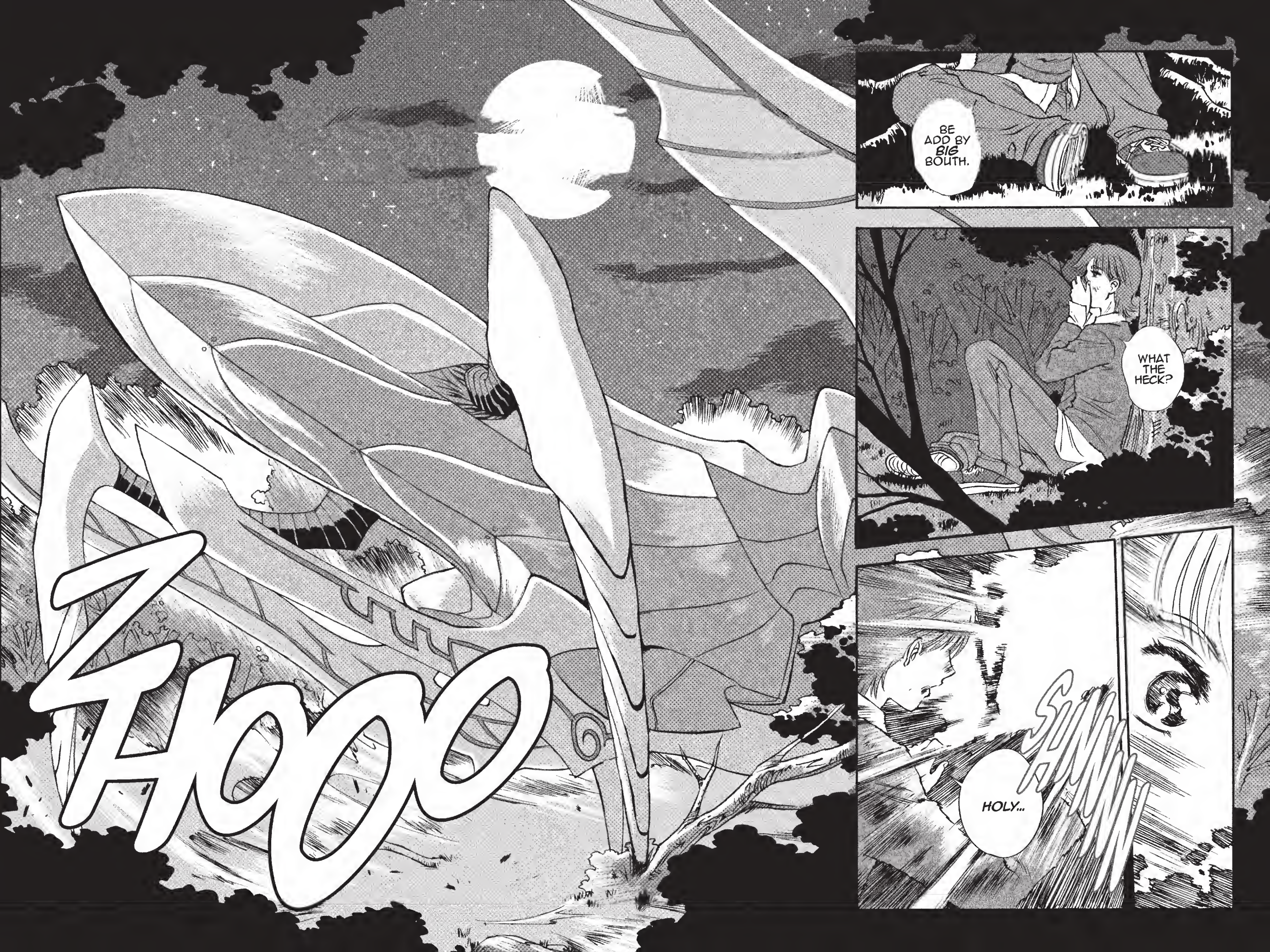

*NEED* A FASHION TIP?
STINGER
HEY, I AIN'T GONNA FIGHT NO *CHICK*.
TELL YOU WHAT. IF YOU PRETEND I'M A *MAN*, I'LL PRETEND YOU ARE.

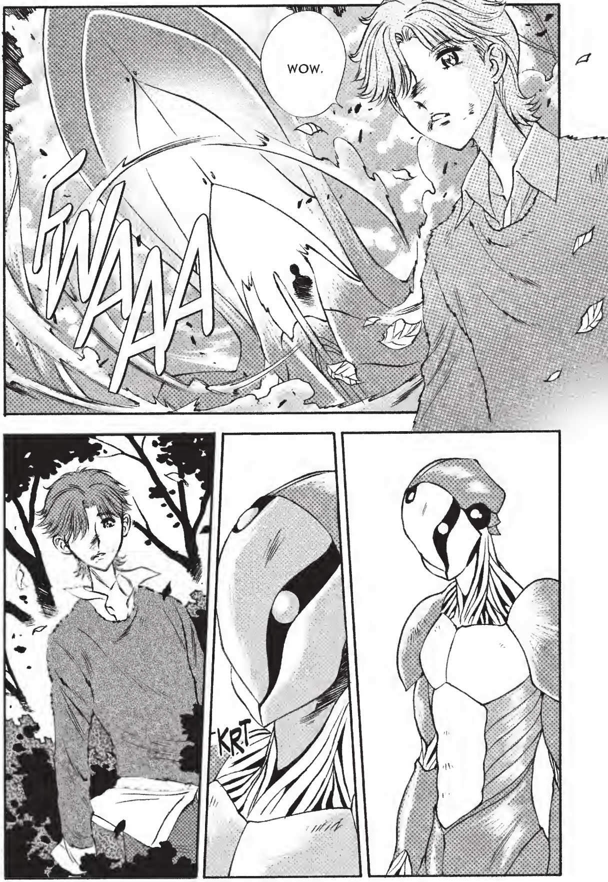

JEM, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'B DORRY.
TH-THANKS, RAE.
DASH

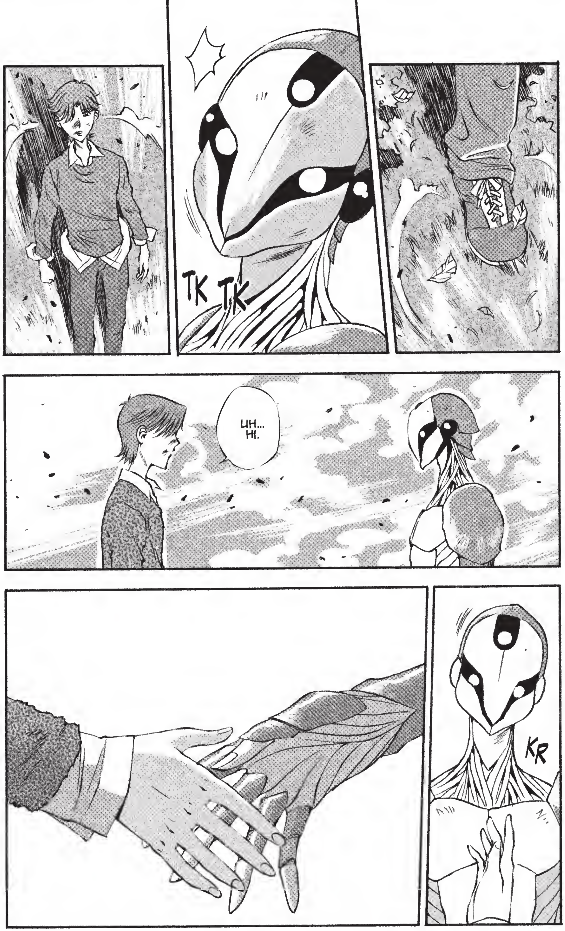

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?!
HUH?
WHAT HAVE *I EVER* DONE TO YOU THAT YOU'D FEED MY BOYFRIEND A BUNCH OF *LIES* ABOUT ME?

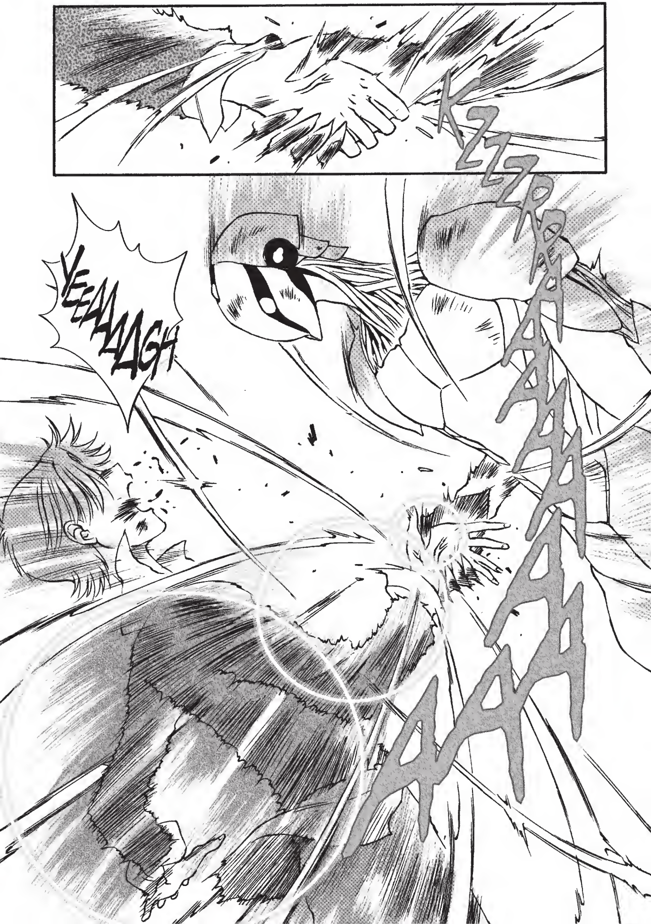

WHAT KIND OF *PERSON* ARE YOU?

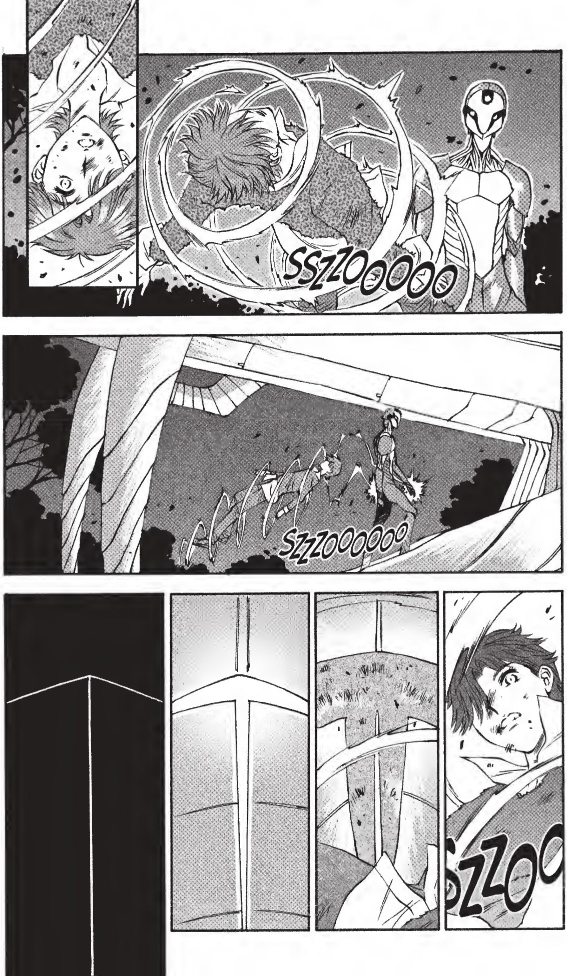


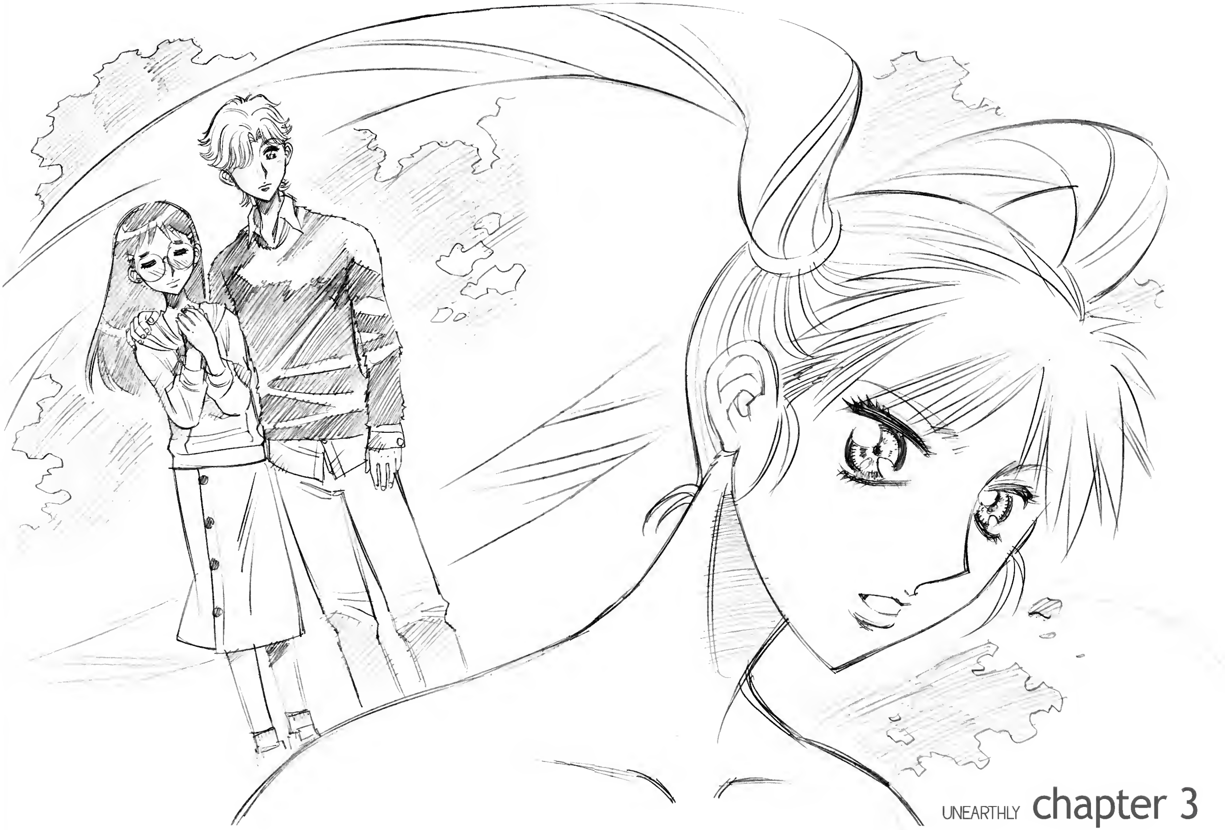

BE ADD BY *BIG* BOUTH.
WHAT THE HECK?
*HOLY...*
SHINNN
ZHOOO


WOW.
FWAAAA
KRT

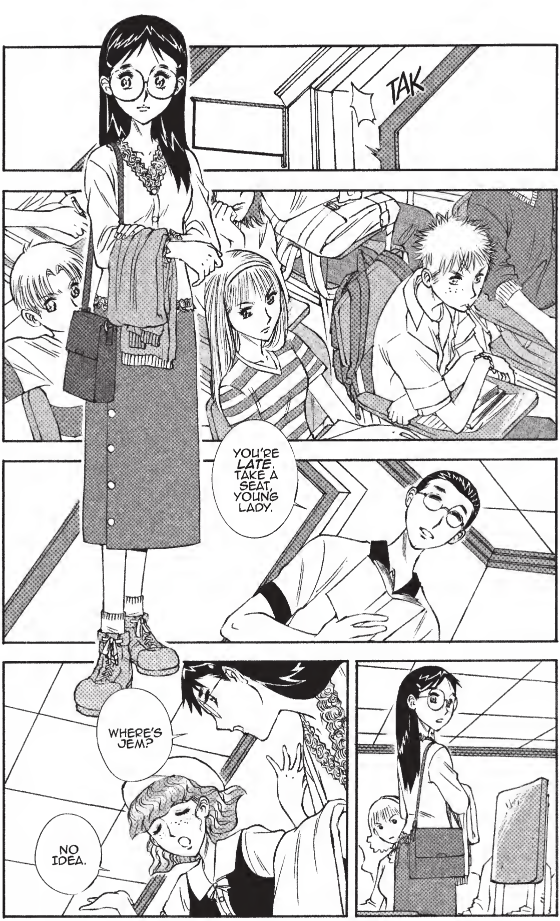

TK TK
UH... HI.
KR

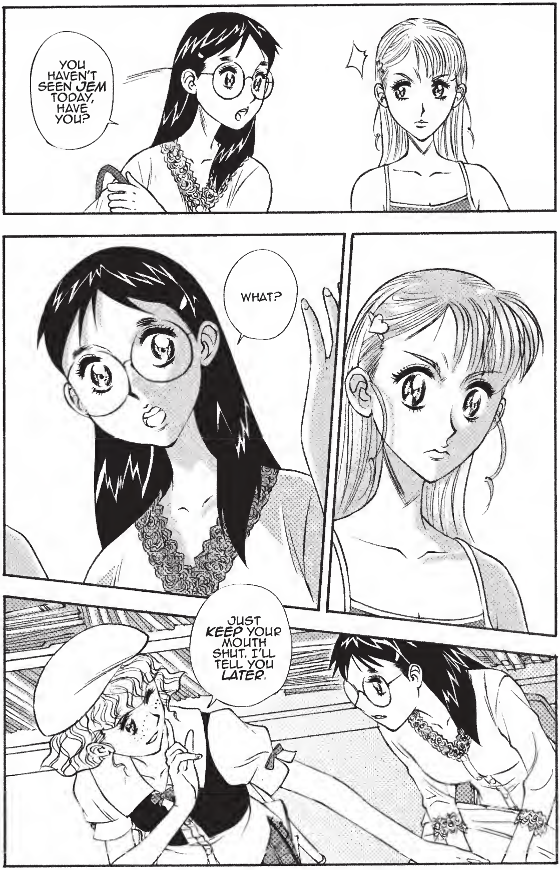

KZZZRRAAAAAAAAAAA
YEEAAAAGH

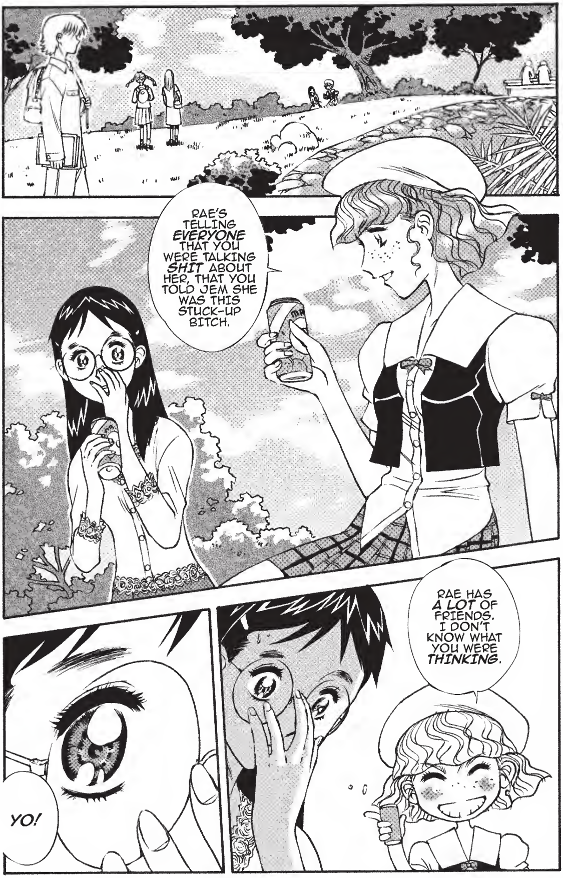

SSZZOOOOOO
SZZZOOOOOO
SZZOO

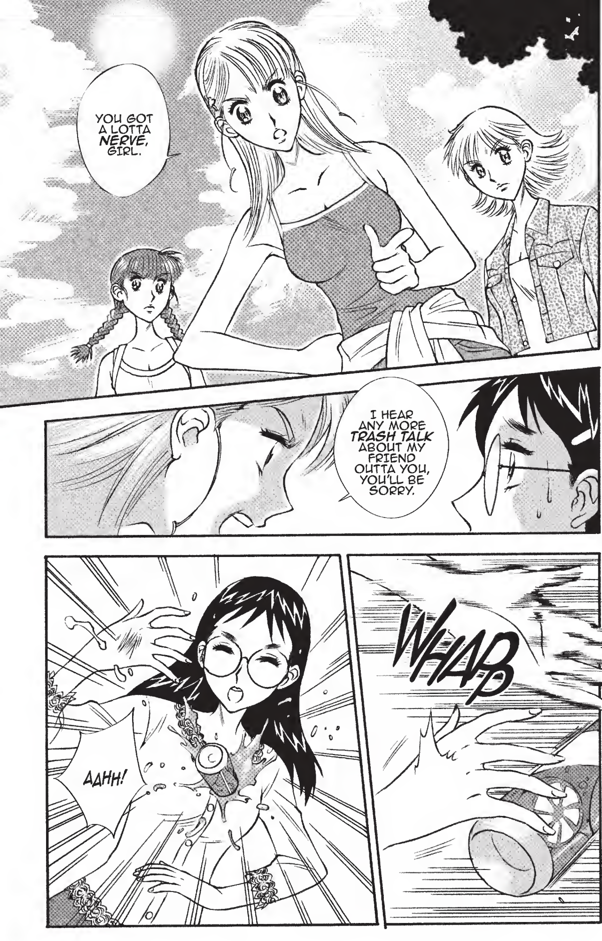


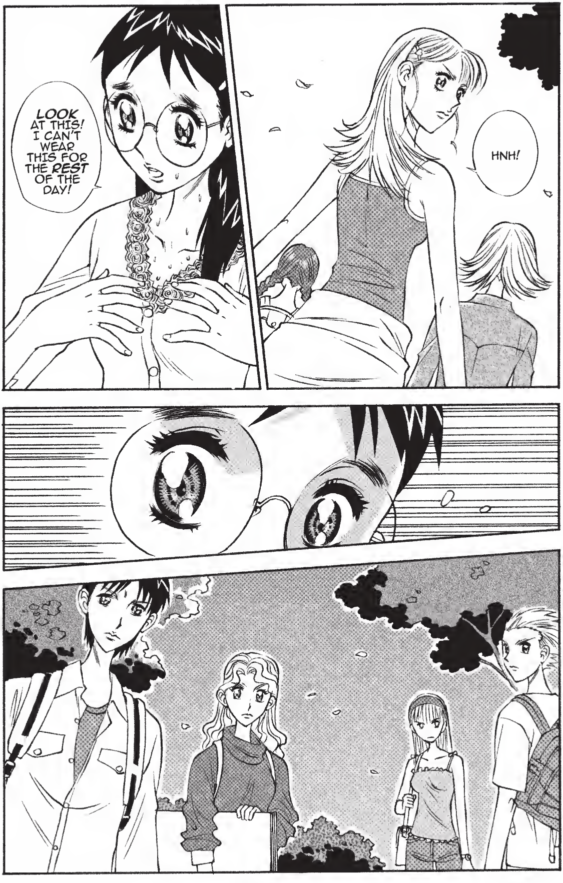
# UNEARTHLY chapter 3

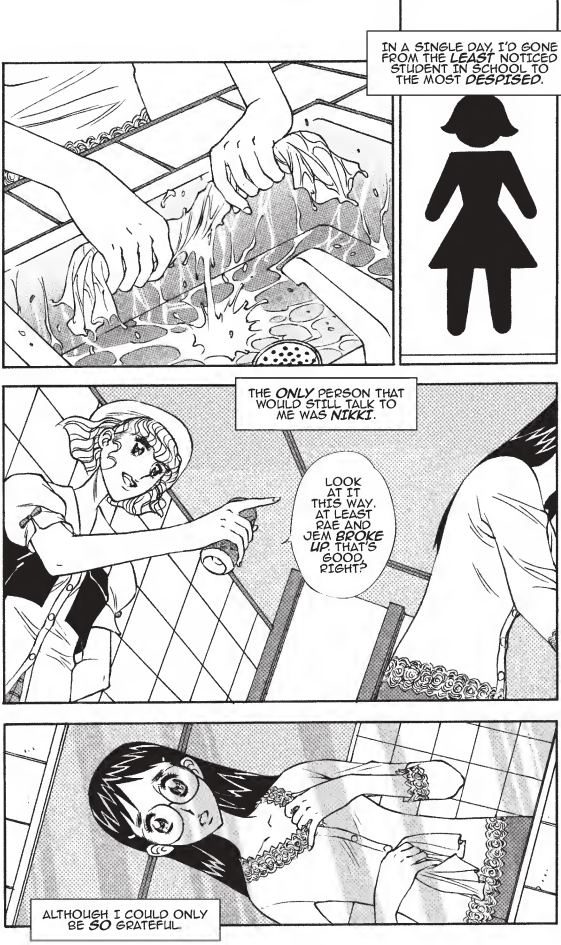

TAK
YOU'RE *LATE*. TAKE A SEAT, YOUNG LADY.
WHERE'S JEM?
NO IDEA.

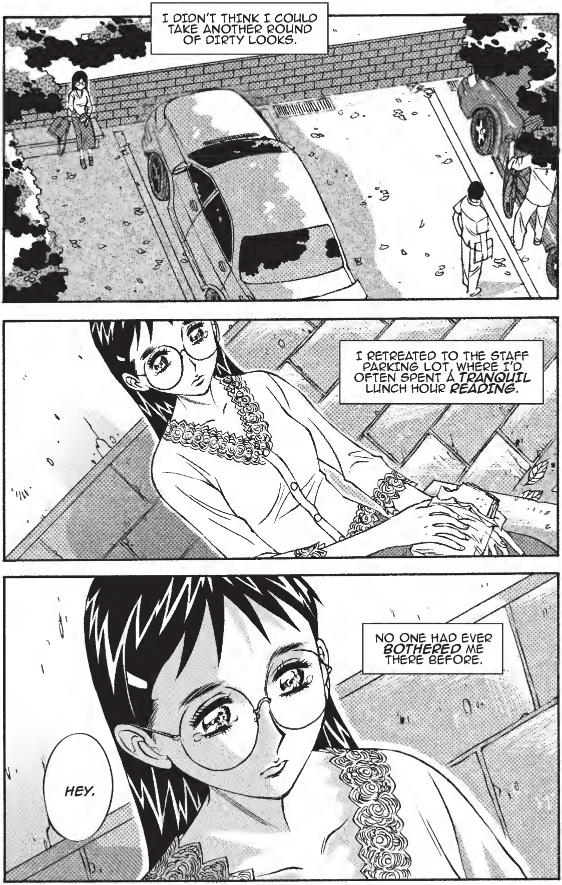

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN *JEM* TODAY, HAVE YOU?
WHAT?
JUST *KEEP* YOUR MOUTH SHUT. I'LL TELL YOU *LATER*.

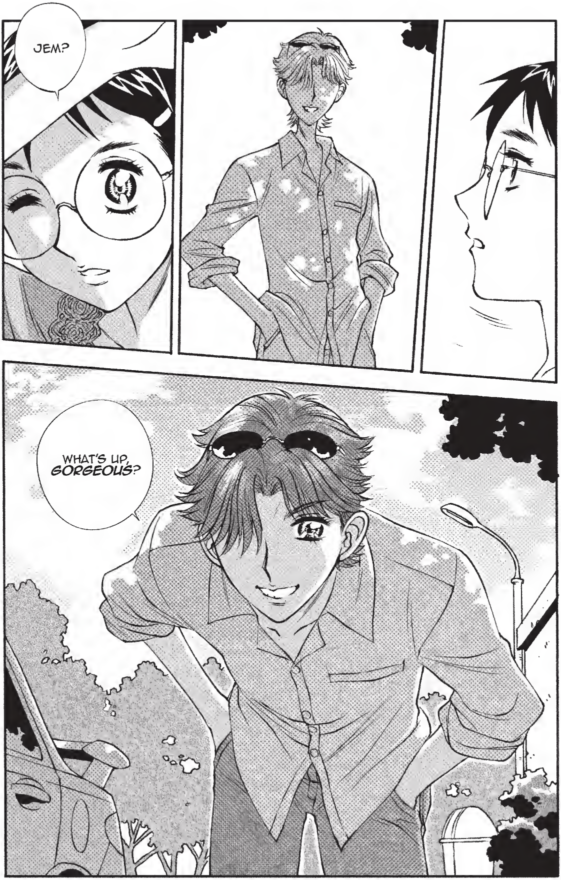

RAE'S TELLING *EVERYONE* THAT YOU WERE TALKING *SHIT* ABOUT HER, THAT YOU TOLD JEM SHE WAS THIS STUCK-UP BITCH.
*YO!*
RAE HAS ***A LOT*** OF FRIENDS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE ***THINKING***.

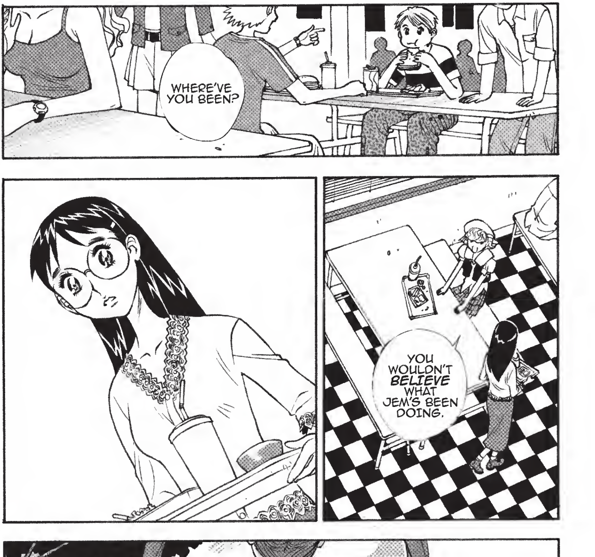

YOU GOT A LOTTA *NERVE*, GIRL.
I HEAR ANY MORE *TRASH TALK* ABOUT MY FRIEND OUTTA YOU, YOU'LL BE SORRY.
WHAP
AAHH!

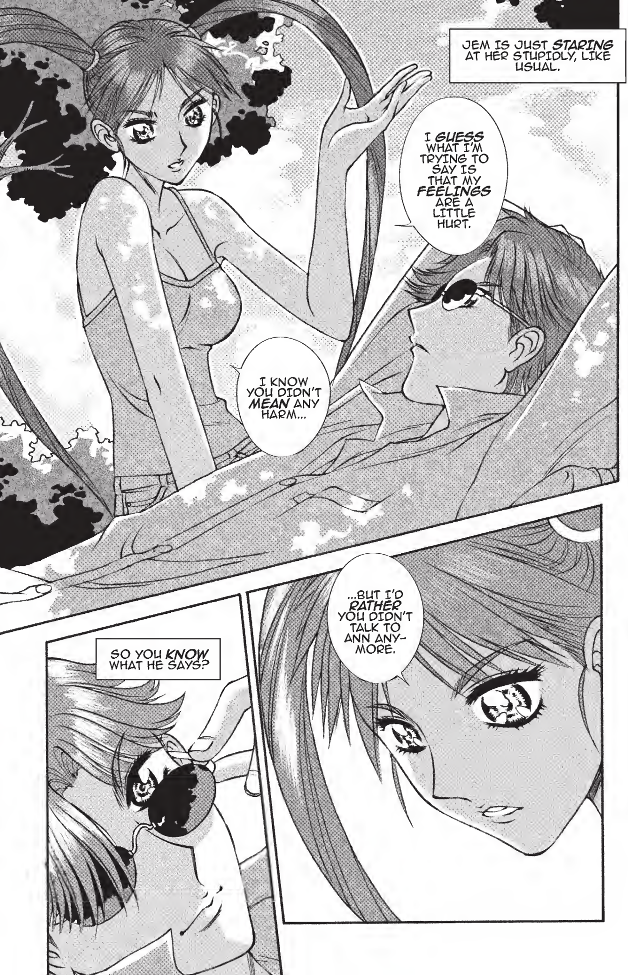

HNH!
LOOK AT THIS! I CAN'T WEAR THIS FOR THE REST OF THE DAY!

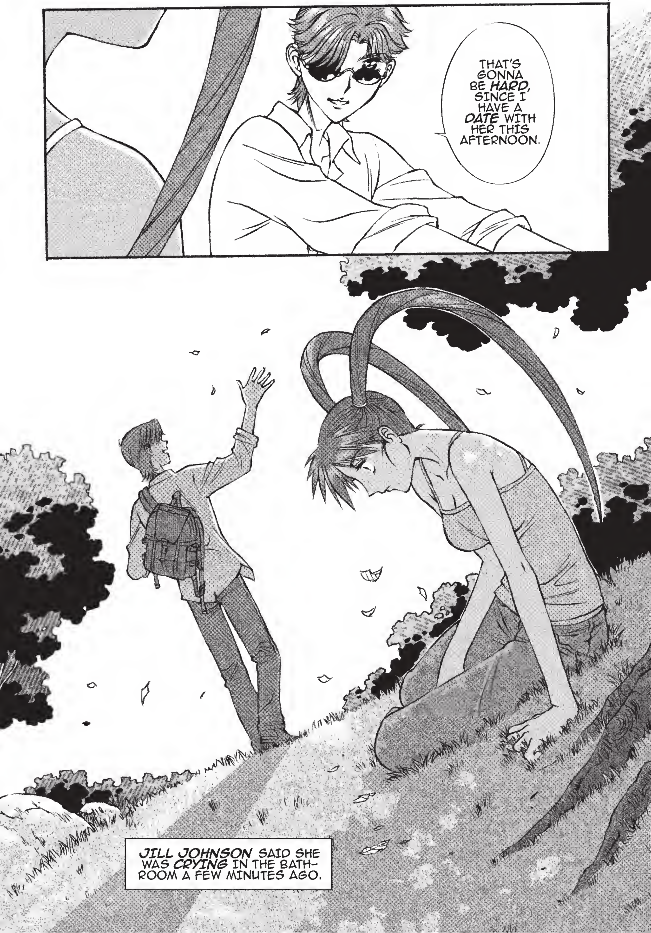

IN A SINGLE DAY, I'D GONE FROM THE *LEAST* NOTICED STUDENT IN SCHOOL TO THE MOST *DESPISED*.
THE *ONLY* PERSON THAT WOULD STILL TALK TO ME WAS *NIKKI*.
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY. AT LEAST RAE AND JEM *BROKE UP*. THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?
ALTHOUGH I COULD ONLY BE *SO* GRATEFUL.

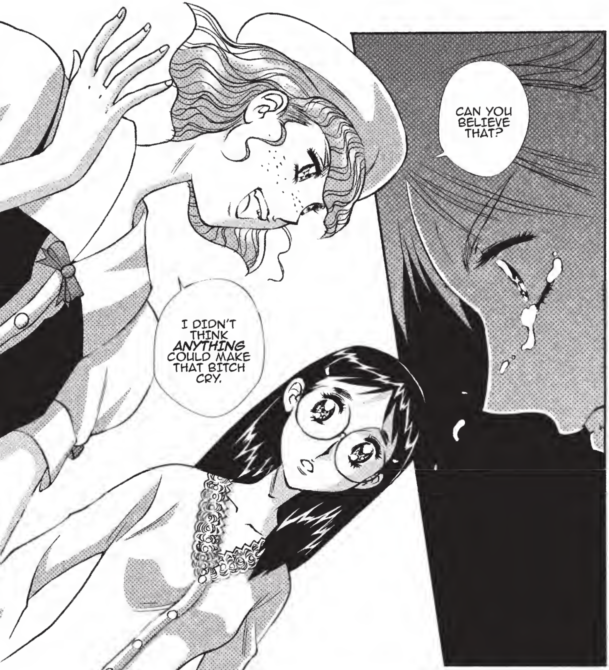

I DIDN'T THINK I COULD TAKE ANOTHER ROUND OF DIRTY LOOKS.
I RETREATED TO THE STAFF PARKING LOT, WHERE I'D OFTEN SPENT A *TRANQUIL* LUNCH HOUR *READING*.
NO ONE HAD EVER *BOTHERED* ME THERE BEFORE.
*HEY.*

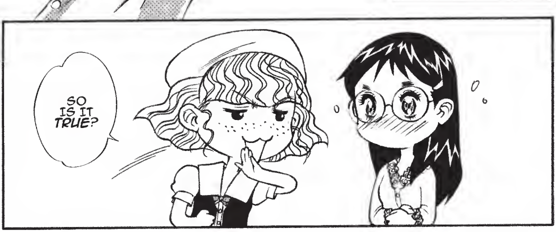

JEM?
WHAT'S UP, *GORGEOUS?*

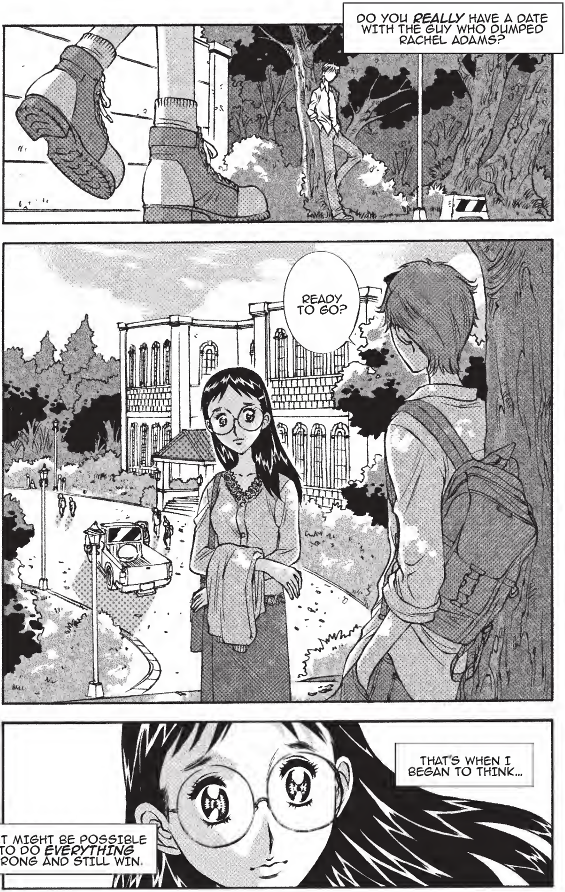

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?
YOU WOULDN'T *BELIEVE* WHAT JEM'S BEEN DOING.
SO RAE COMES UP TO JEM AND STARTS HER *SMOTHERING* THING, RIGHT?

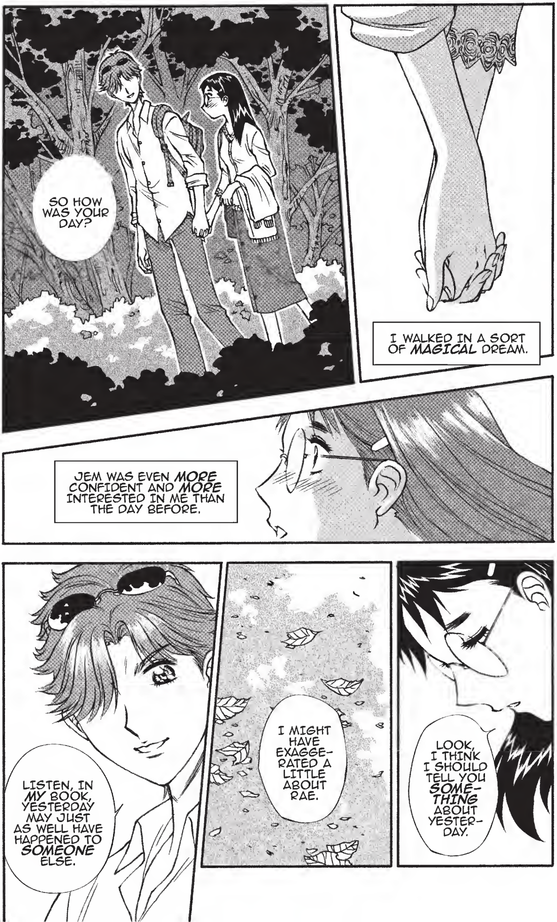

JEM IS JUST *STARING* AT HER STUPIDLY, LIKE USUAL.
I *GUESS* WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT MY *FEELINGS* ARE A LITTLE HURT.
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T *MEAN* ANY HARM...
...BUT I'D *RATHER* YOU DIDN'T TALK TO ANN ANYMORE.
SO YOU *KNOW* WHAT HE SAYS?

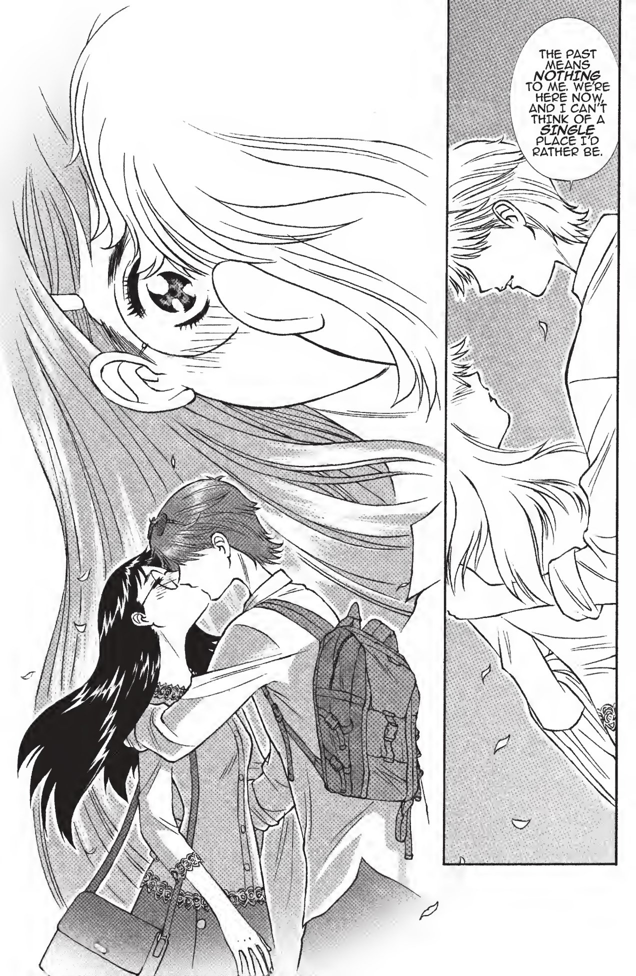

THAT'S GONNA BE *HARD*, SINCE I HAVE A *DATE* WITH HER THIS AFTERNOON.
*JILL JOHNSON* SAID SHE WAS *CRYING* IN THE BATHROOM A FEW MINUTES AGO.

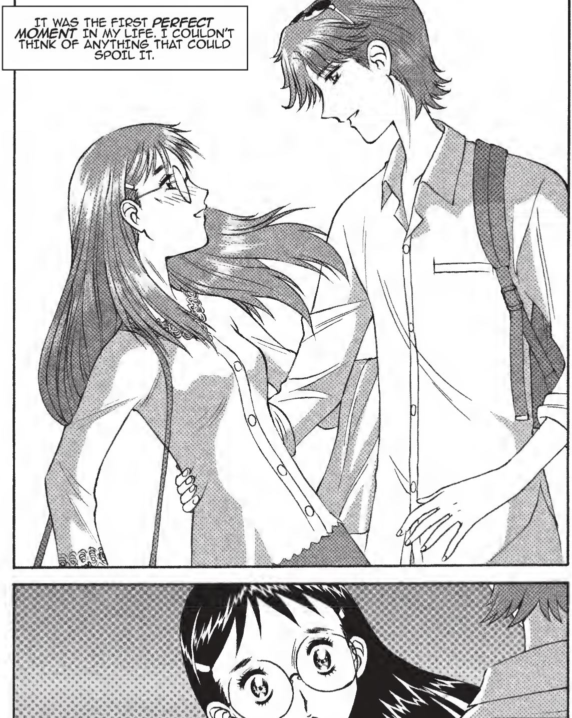

CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
I DIDN'T THINK *ANYTHING* COULD MAKE THAT BITCH CRY.

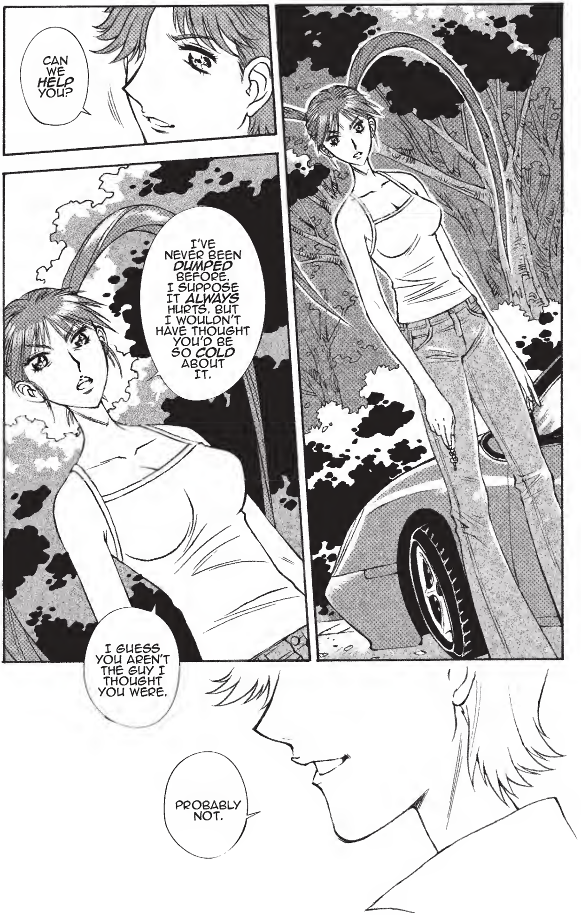

SO IS IT *TRUE*?

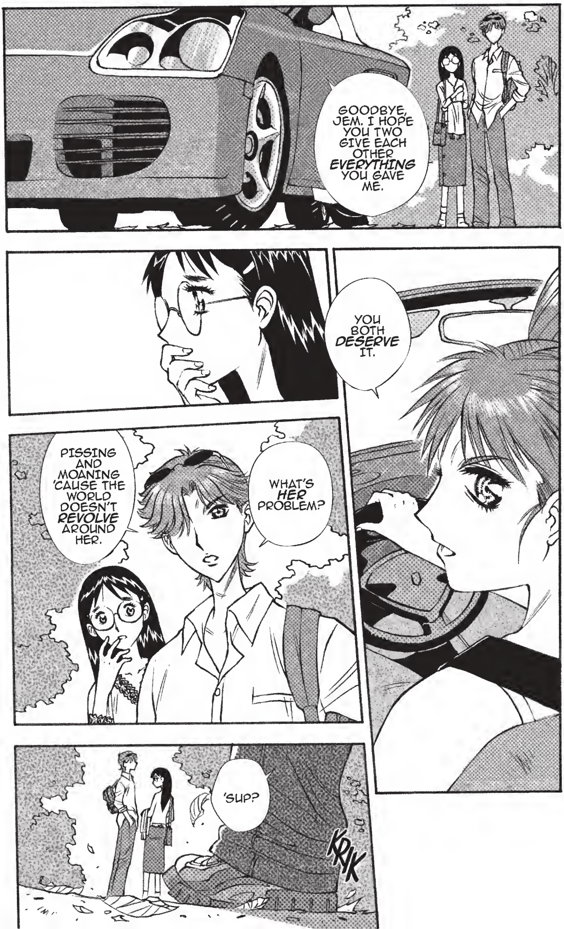

DO YOU *REALLY* HAVE A DATE WITH THE GUY WHO DUMPED RACHEL ADAMS?
READY TO GO?
THAT'S WHEN I BEGAN TO THINK...
...IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO DO *EVERYTHING* WRONG AND STILL WIN.

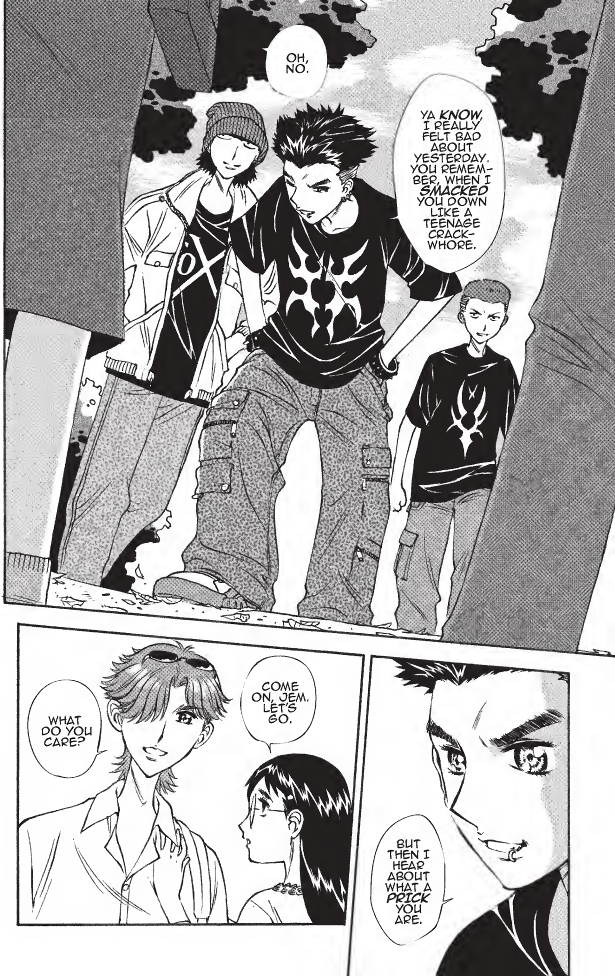

I WALKED IN A SORT OF *MAGICAL* DREAM.
SO HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
JEM WAS EVEN *MORE* CONFIDENT AND *MORE* INTERESTED IN ME THAN THE DAY BEFORE.
LOOK, I THINK I SHOULD TELL YOU *SOMETHING* ABOUT YESTERDAY.
I MIGHT HAVE EXAGGERATED A LITTLE ABOUT RAE.
LISTEN, IN *MY* BOOK, YESTERDAY MAY JUST AS WELL HAVE HAPPENED TO *SOMEONE* ELSE.

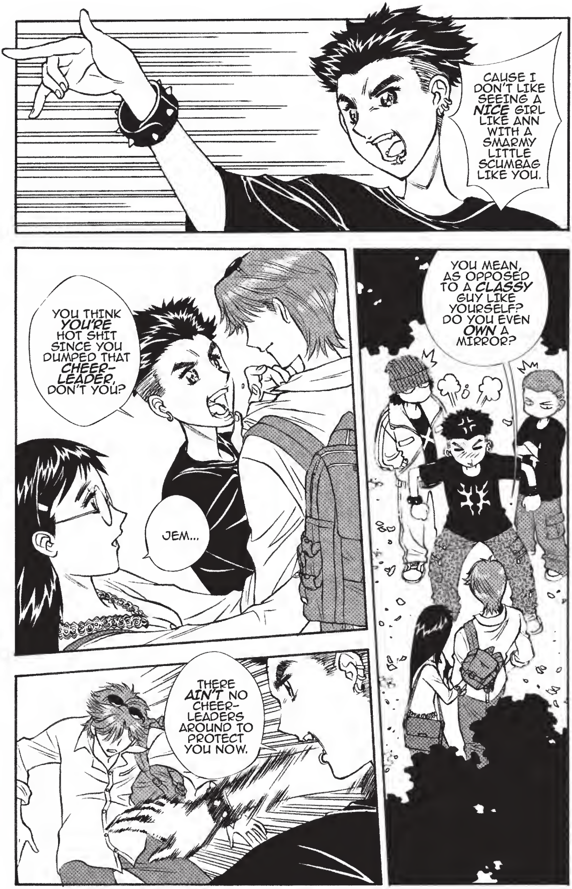

THE PAST MEANS *NOTHING* TO ME. WE'RE HERE NOW, AND I CAN'T THINK OF A *SINGLE* PLACE I'D RATHER BE.

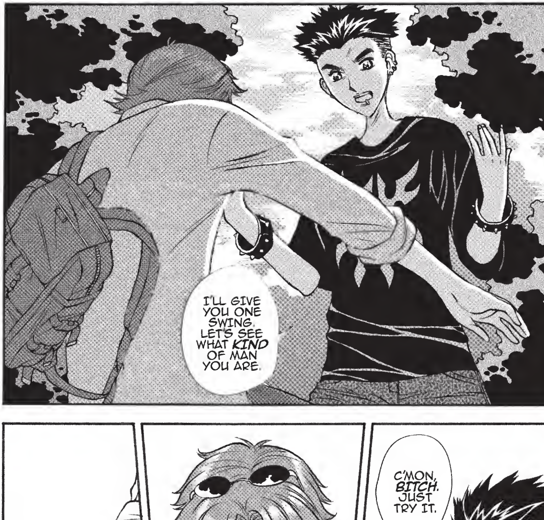

IT WAS THE FIRST *PERFECT MOMENT* IN MY LIFE. I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING THAT COULD SPOIL IT.
BUT LEAVE IT TO THE *UNIVERSE* TO THINK OF JUST THE THING.

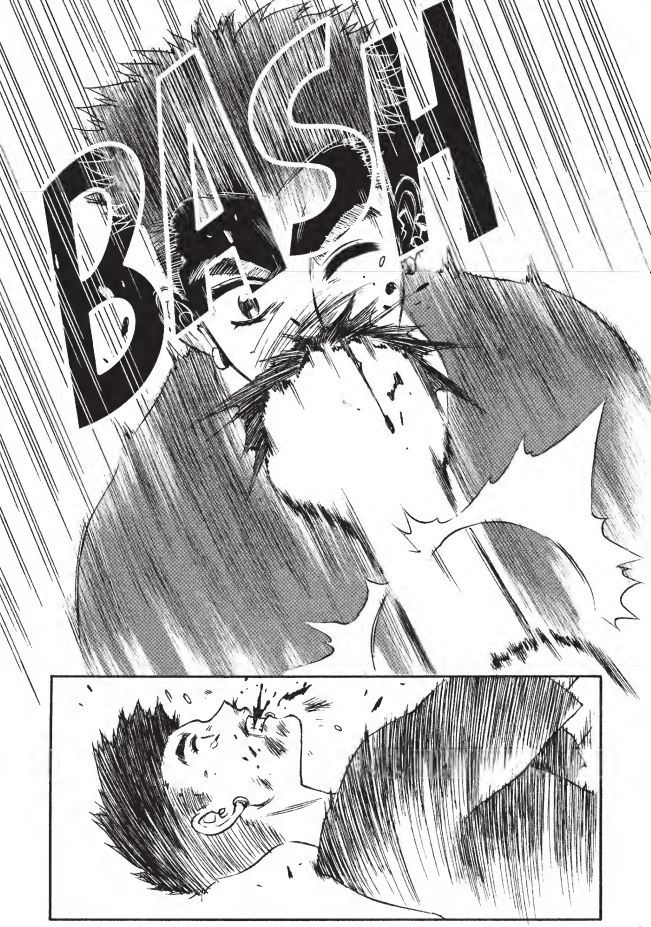

CAN WE *HELP* YOU?
I'VE NEVER BEEN *DUMPED* BEFORE. I SUPPOSE IT *ALWAYS* HURTS. BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D BE SO *COLD* ABOUT IT.
I GUESS YOU AREN'T THE GUY I THOUGHT YOU WERE.
PROBABLY NOT.

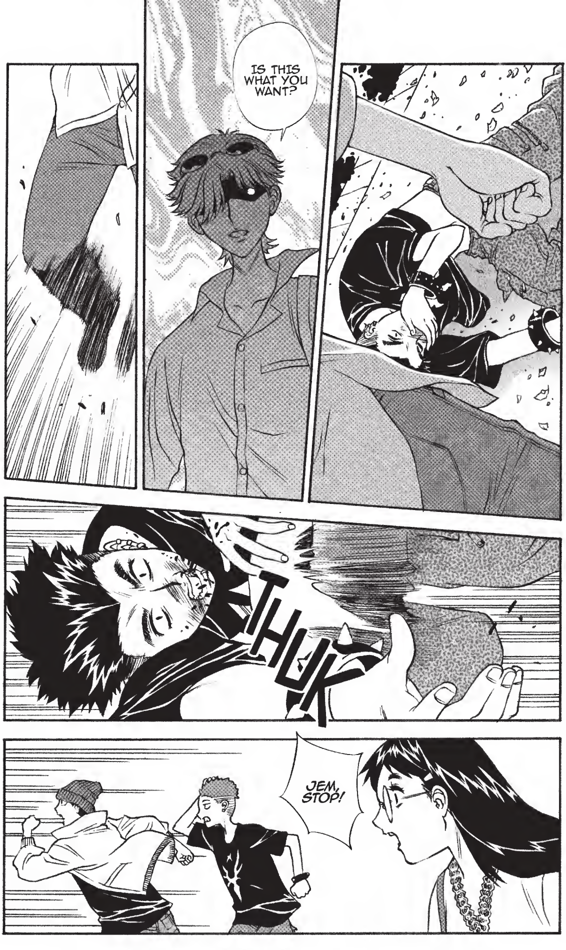

GOODBYE, JEM. I HOPE YOU TWO GIVE EACH OTHER *EVERYTHING* YOU GAVE ME.
YOU BOTH *DESERVE* IT.
WHAT'S *HER* PROBLEM?
PISSING AND MOANING 'CAUSE THE WORLD DOESN'T *REVOLVE* AROUND HER.
'SUP?
KRIK

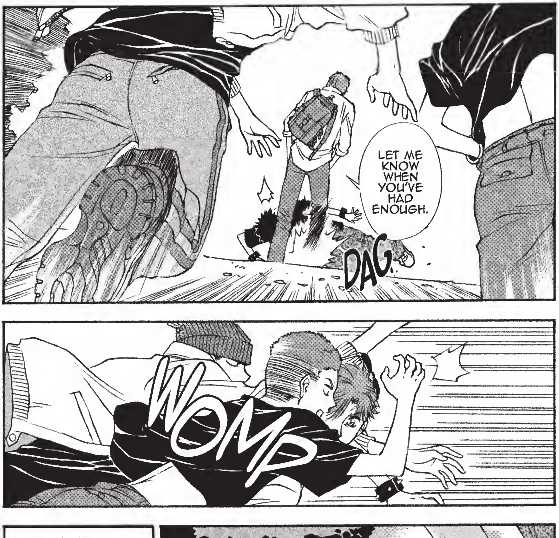

OH, NO.
YA *KNOW*, I REALLY FELT BAD ABOUT YESTERDAY. YOU REMEMBER, WHEN I *SMACKED* YOU DOWN LIKE A TEENAGE CRACK-WHORE.
WHAT DO YOU CARE?
COME ON, JEM. LET'S GO.
BUT THEN I HEAR ABOUT WHAT A *PRICK* YOU ARE.

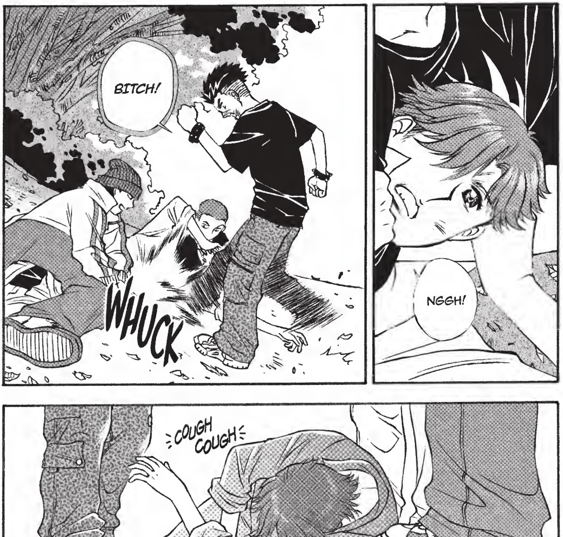

CAUSE I DON'T LIKE SEEING A *NICE* GIRL LIKE ANN WITH A SMARMY LITTLE SCUMBAG LIKE YOU.
YOU THINK *YOU'RE* HOT SHIT SINCE YOU DUMPED THAT *CHEER-LEADER*, DON'T YOU?
JEM...
THERE *AIN'T* NO CHEER-LEADERS AROUND TO PROTECT YOU NOW.
YOU MEAN, AS OPPOSED TO A *CLASSY* GUY LIKE YOURSELF? DO YOU EVEN *OWN* A MIRROR?

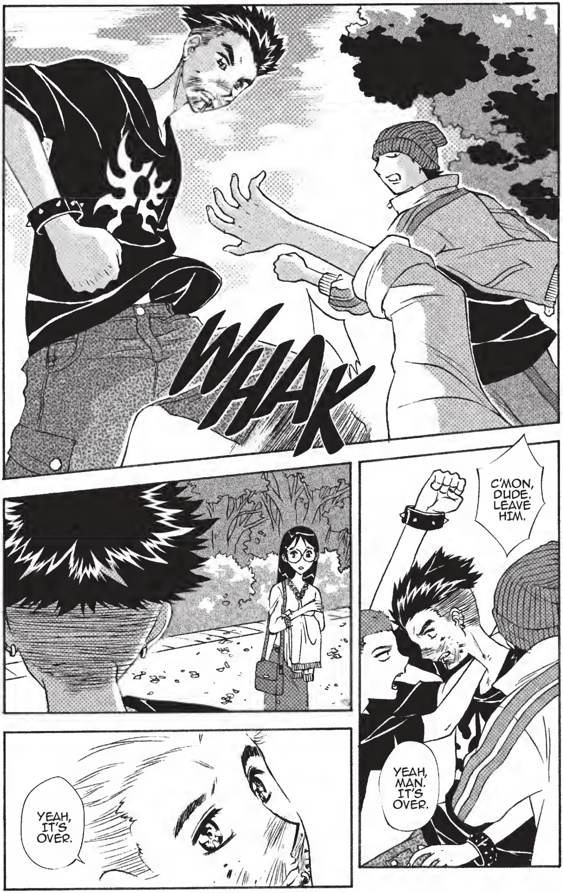

I'LL GIVE YOU ONE SWING. LET'S SEE WHAT *KIND* OF MAN YOU ARE.
C'MON, *BITCH*. JUST TRY IT.
IF YOU...
...INSIST.

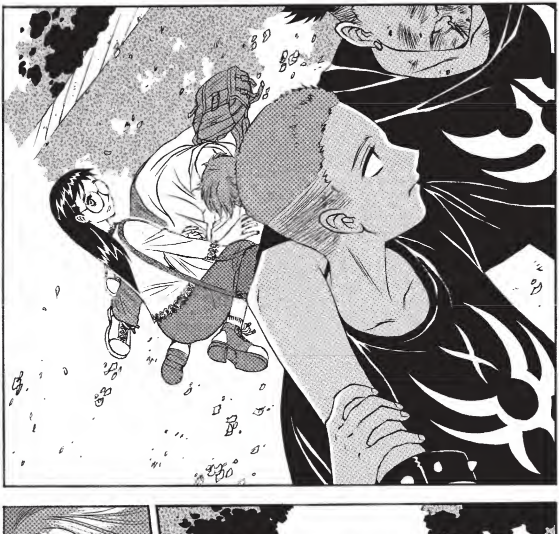

BASH


IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT?
THUK
JEM, STOP!

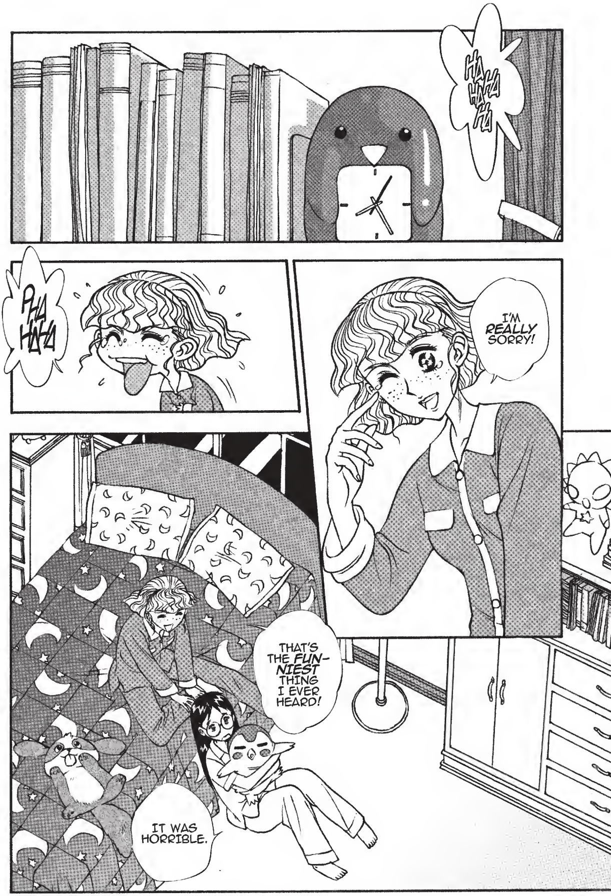

LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.
DAG
WOMP
JUST COOL DOWN, DUDE.
YOU LIKE *KICKING* PEOPLE WHEN THEY'RE DOWN, HUH?

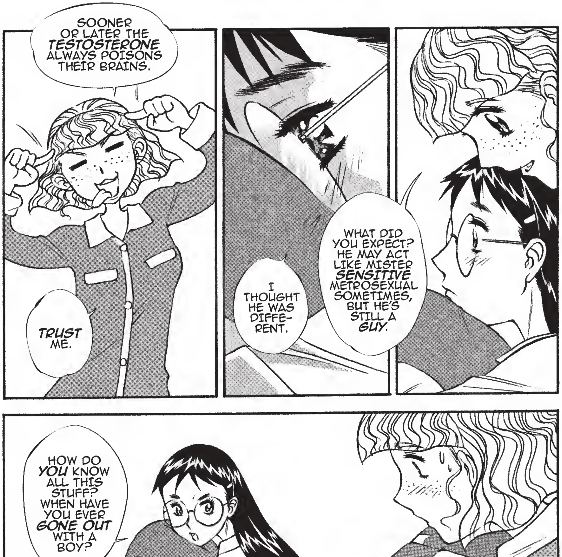

NGGH!
BITCH!
WHUCK
COUGH COUGH
MAN, YOU *AIN'T* SHIT.
THANKS. SORRY I CAN'T SAY *THE SAME* FOR YOU.

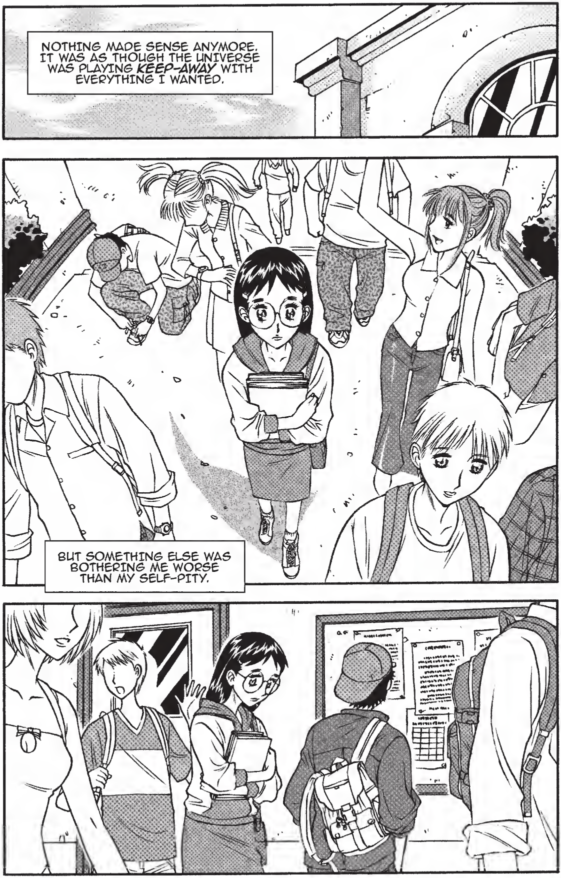

WHAK
C'MON, DUDE. LEAVE HIM.
YEAH, MAN. IT'S OVER.
YEAH, IT'S OVER.

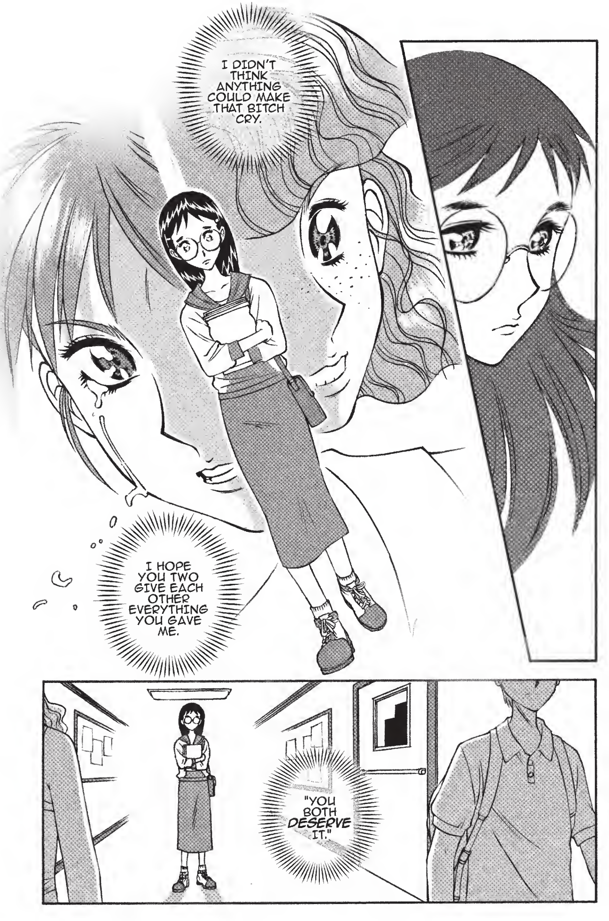

I THINK WE MAY WANT TO *POSTPONE* OUR *DATE*, SUGAR.

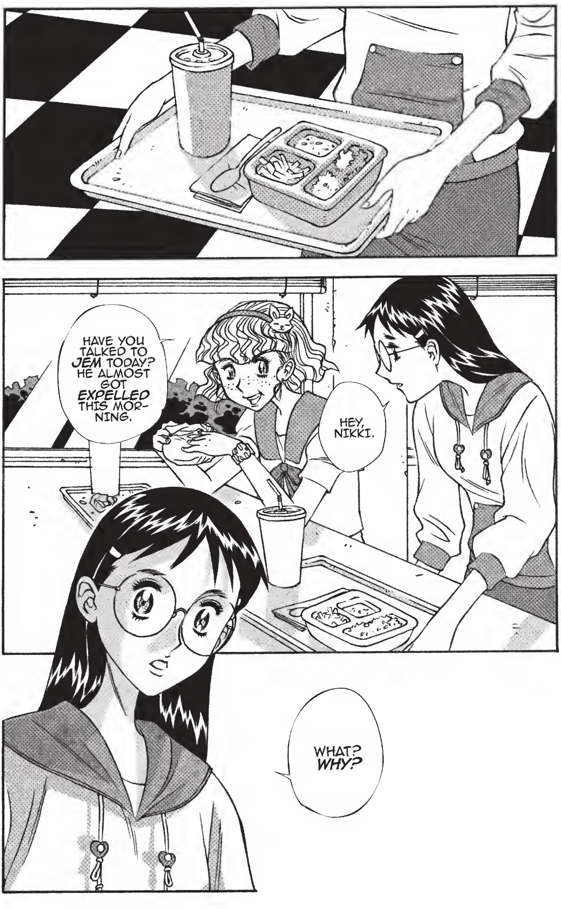
# UNEARTHLY chapter 4

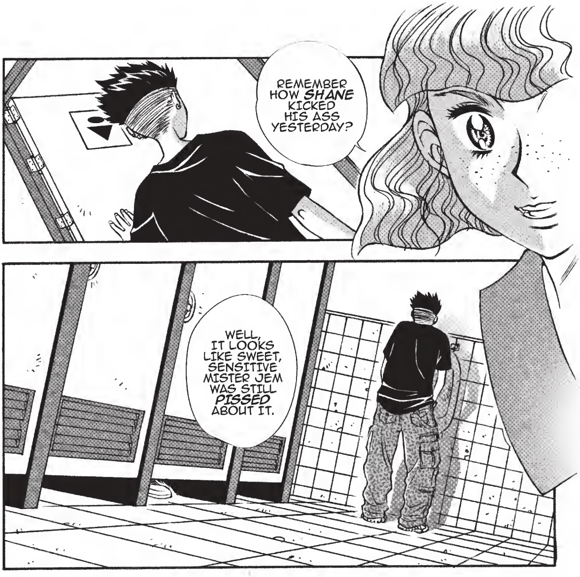

HA HA HA HA
I'M *REALLY* SORRY!
PHA HA HA
THAT'S THE *FUNNIEST* THING I EVER HEARD!
IT WAS HORRIBLE.

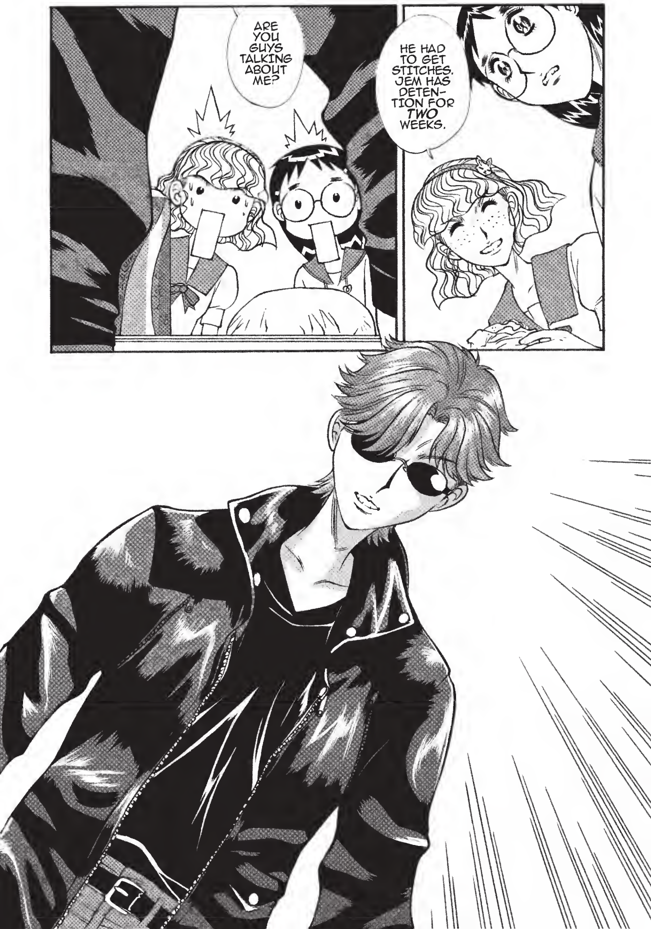

SOONER OR LATER THE *TESTOSTERONE* ALWAYS POISONS THEIR BRAINS.
*TRUST* ME.
I THOUGHT HE WAS DIFFERENT.
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? HE MAY ACT LIKE MISTER *SENSITIVE* METROSEXUAL SOMETIMES, BUT HE'S STILL A *GUY*.
HOW DO *YOU* KNOW ALL THIS STUFF? WHEN HAVE YOU EVER *GONE OUT* WITH A BOY?
HEY! I'M JUST *TRYING* TO HELP, ANN. WHAT CRAWLED UP YOUR PUCKER?

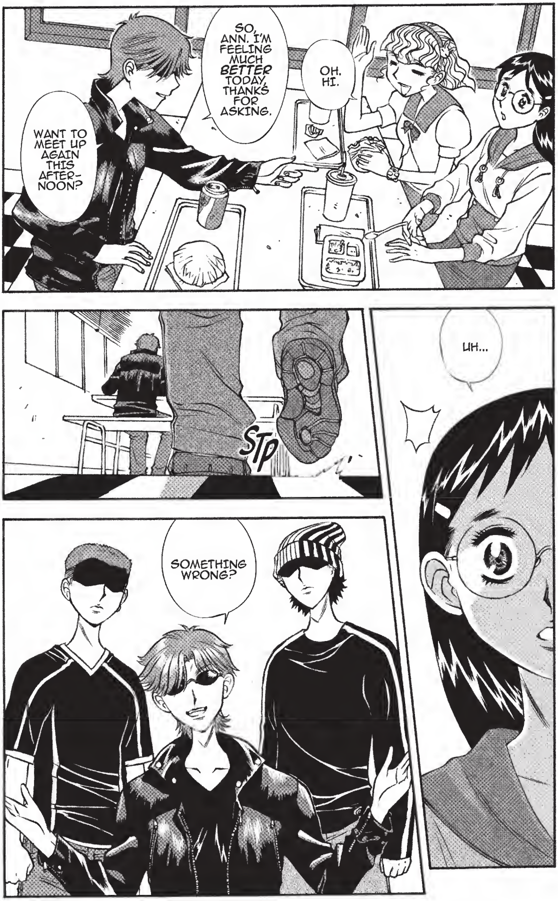

NOTHING MADE SENSE ANYMORE. IT WAS AS THOUGH THE UNIVERSE WAS PLAYING *KEEP-AWAY* WITH EVERYTHING I WANTED.
BUT SOMETHING ELSE WAS BOTHERING ME WORSE THAN MY SELF-PITY.

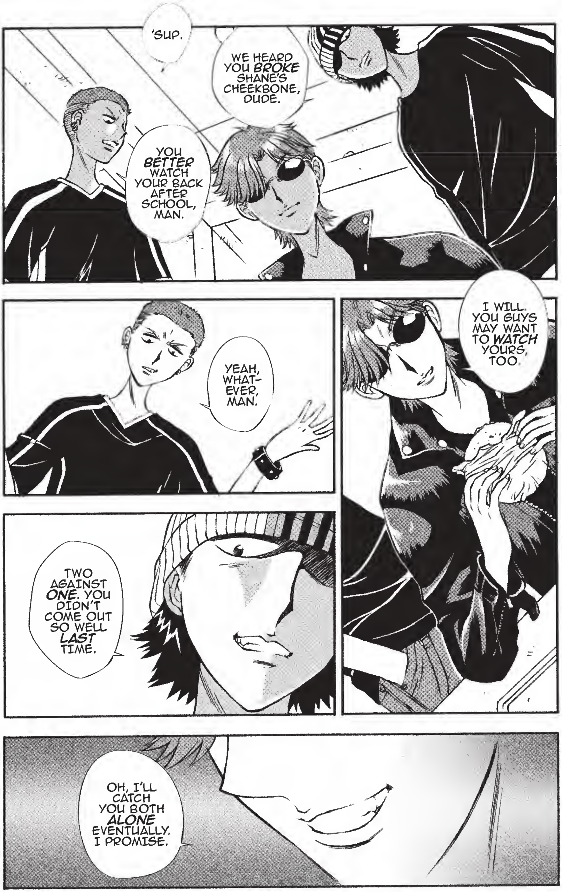

I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING COULD MAKE THAT BITCH CRY.
I HOPE YOU TWO GIVE EACH OTHER EVERYTHING YOU GAVE ME.
"YOU BOTH *DESERVE* IT."

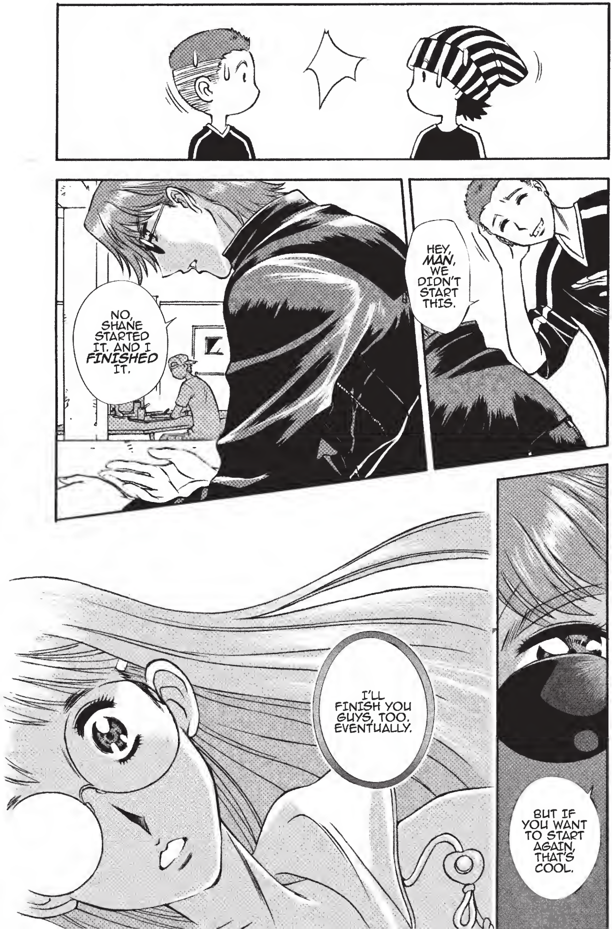

HEY, NIKKI.
HAVE YOU TALKED TO *JEM* TODAY? HE ALMOST GOT *EXPELLED* THIS MORNING.
WHAT? *WHY?*

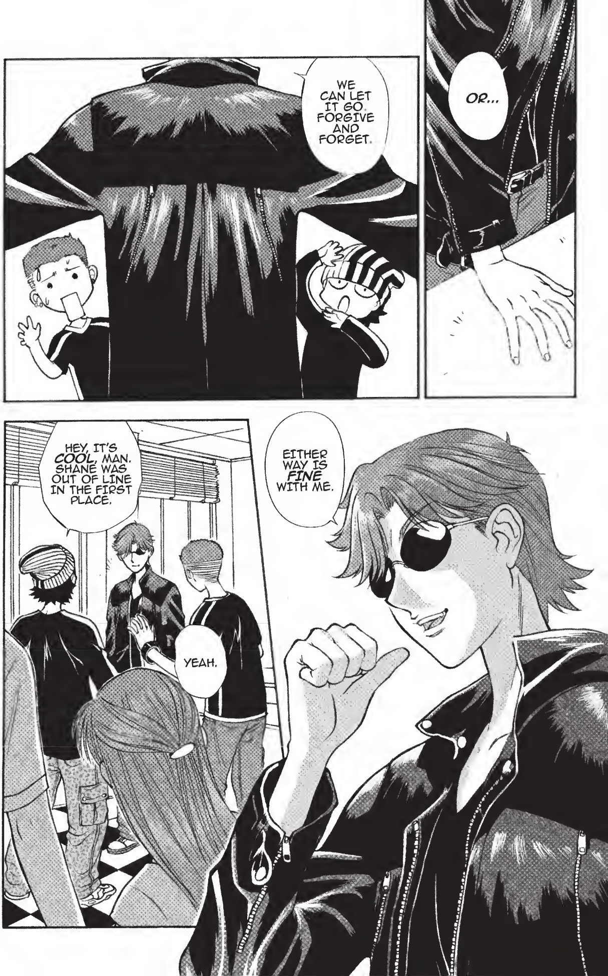

REMEMBER HOW *SHANE* KICKED HIS ASS YESTERDAY?
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE SWEET, SENSITIVE MISTER JEM WAS STILL *PISSED* ABOUT IT.
MESSED SHANE UP *REAL* BAD.

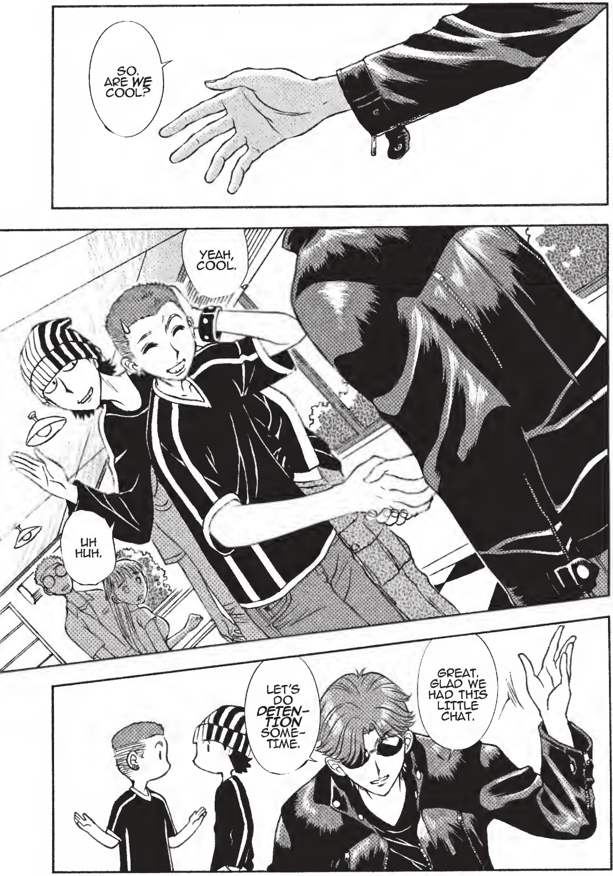

HE HAD TO GET STITCHES. JEM HAS DETENTION FOR *TWO* WEEKS.
ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT ME?

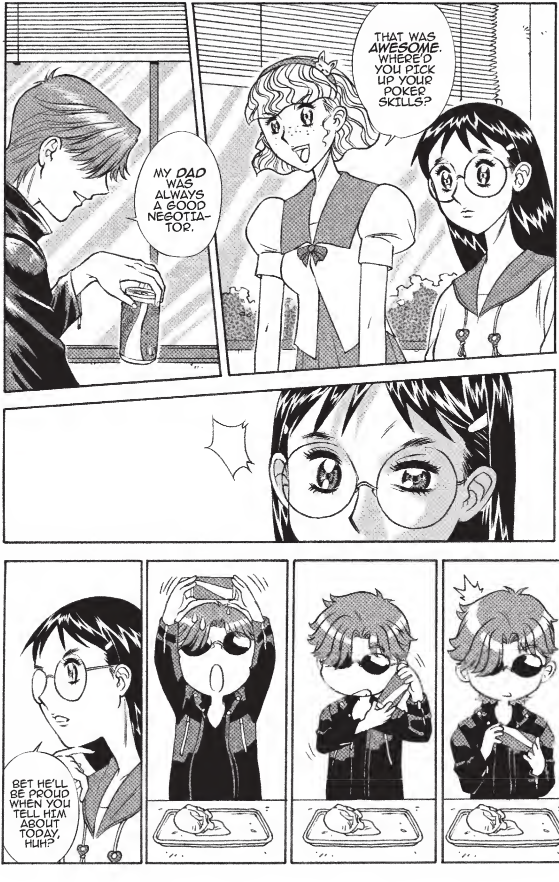

OH. HI.
SO, ANN. I'M FEELING MUCH *BETTER* TODAY, THANKS FOR ASKING.
WANT TO MEET UP AGAIN THIS AFTERNOON?
UH...
STP
SOMETHING WRONG?

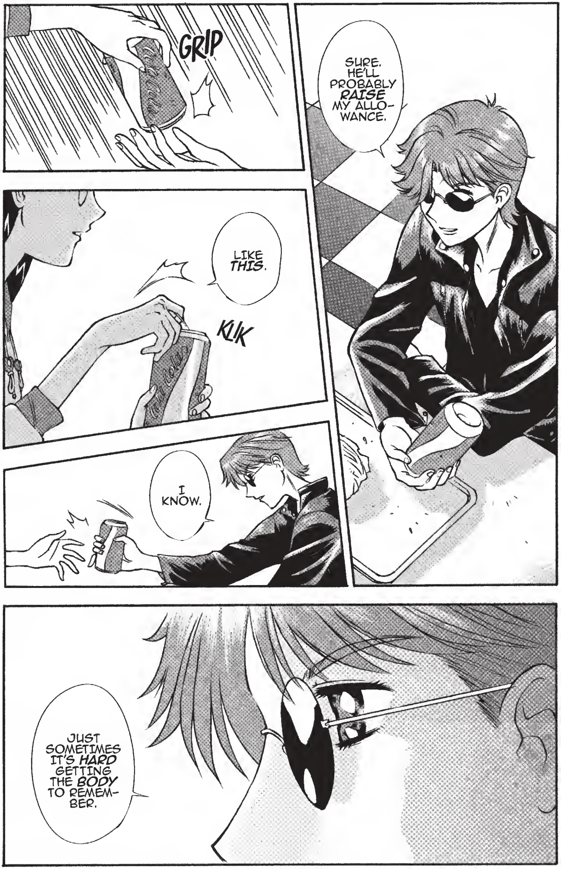

'SUP.
WE HEARD YOU *BROKE* SHANE'S CHEEKBONE, DUDE.
YOU *BETTER* WATCH YOUR BACK AFTER SCHOOL, MAN.
YEAH, WHATEVER, MAN.
I WILL. YOU GUYS MAY WANT TO *WATCH* YOURS, TOO.
TWO AGAINST *ONE*. YOU DIDN'T COME OUT SO WELL *LAST* TIME.
OH, I'LL CATCH YOU BOTH *ALONE* EVENTUALLY. I PROMISE.

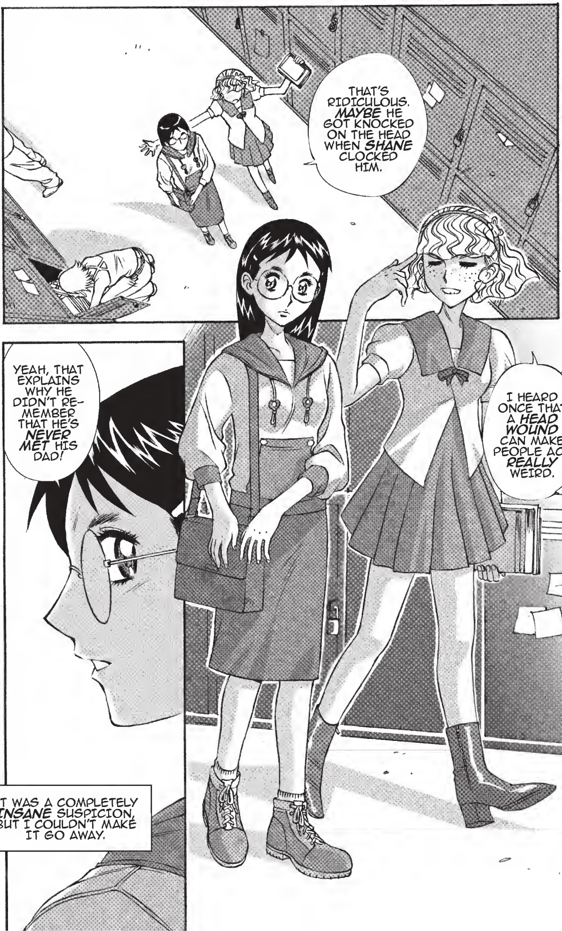

HEY, *MAN*, WE DIDN'T START THIS.
NO, SHANE STARTED IT. AND I *FINISHED* IT.
I'LL FINISH YOU GUYS, TOO, EVENTUALLY.
BUT IF YOU WANT TO START AGAIN, THAT'S COOL.

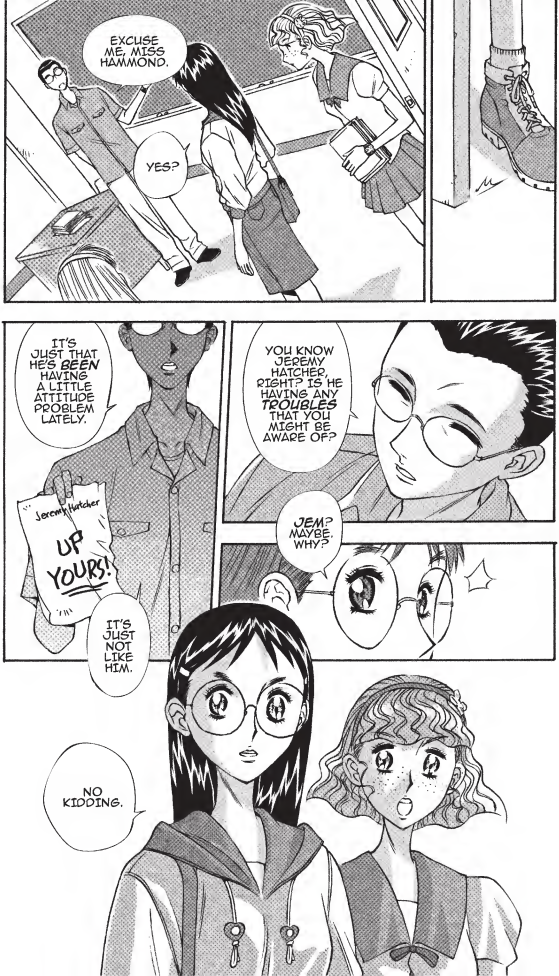

WE CAN LET IT GO. FORGIVE AND FORGET.
*OR...*
EITHER WAY IS ***FINE*** WITH ME.
HEY, IT'S ***COOL***, MAN. SHANE WAS OUT OF LINE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YEAH.

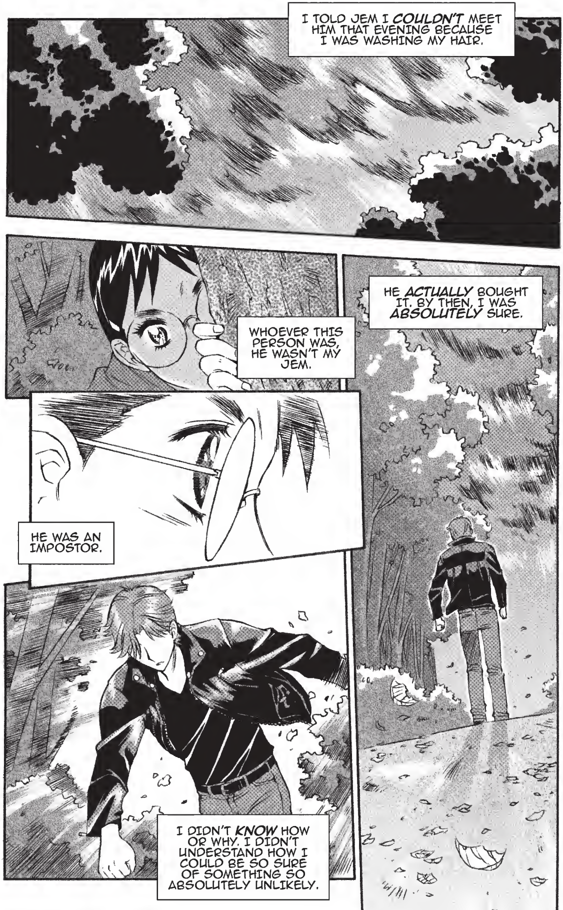

SO, ARE *WE* COOL?
YEAH, COOL.
UH HUH.
GREAT. GLAD WE HAD THIS LITTLE CHAT.
LET'S DO *DETENTION* SOMETIME.

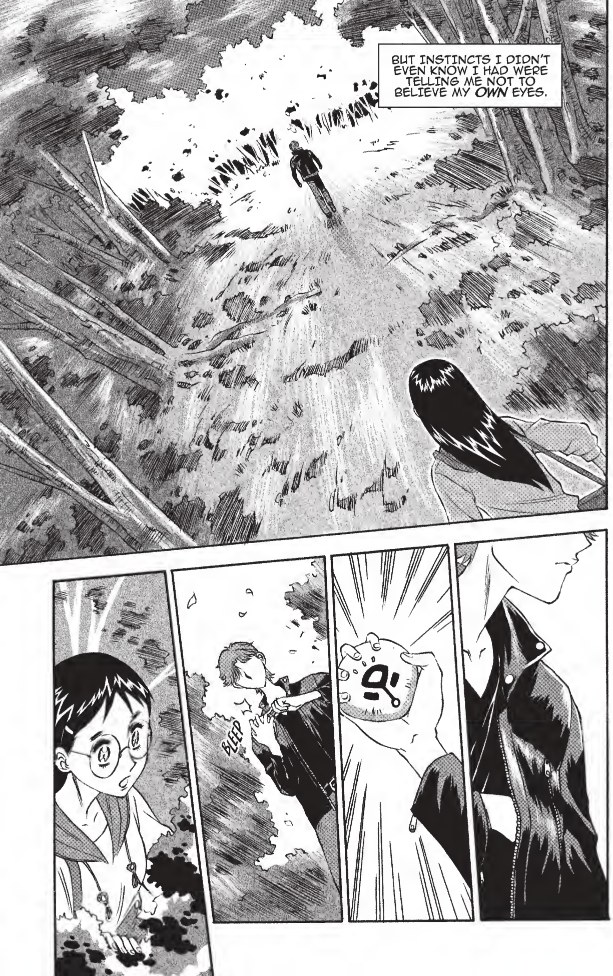

THAT WAS *AWESOME*. WHERE'D YOU PICK UP YOUR POKER SKILLS?
MY *DAD* WAS ALWAYS A GOOD NEGOTIATOR.
BET HE'LL BE PROUD WHEN YOU TELL HIM ABOUT TODAY, HUH?

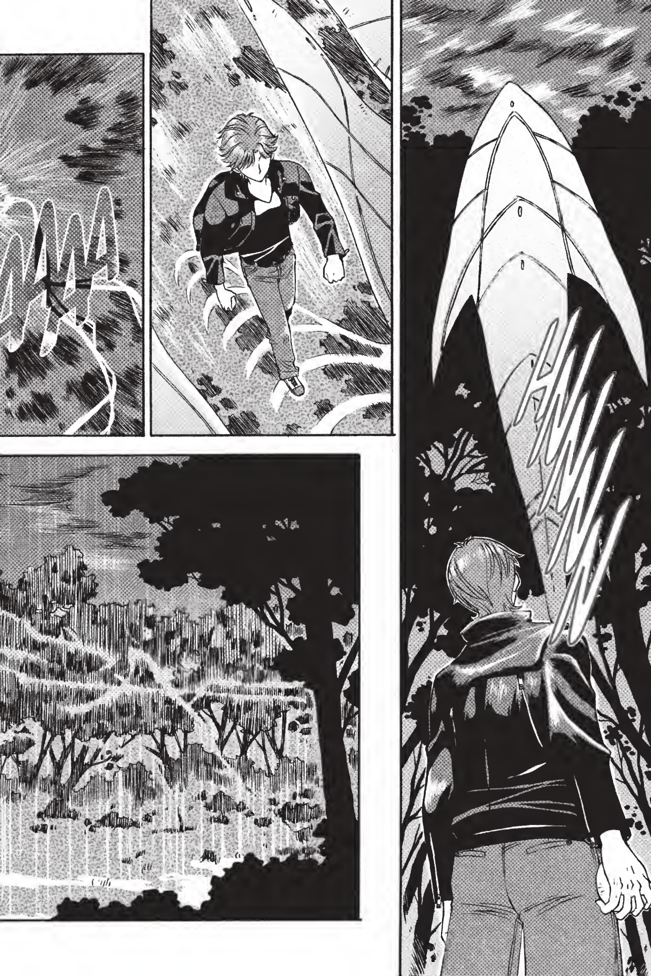

SURE. HE'LL PROBABLY *RAISE* MY ALLOWANCE.
GRIP
LIKE *THIS*.
KLIK
I KNOW.
JUST SOMETIMES IT'S *HARD* GETTING THE *BODY* TO REMEMBER.

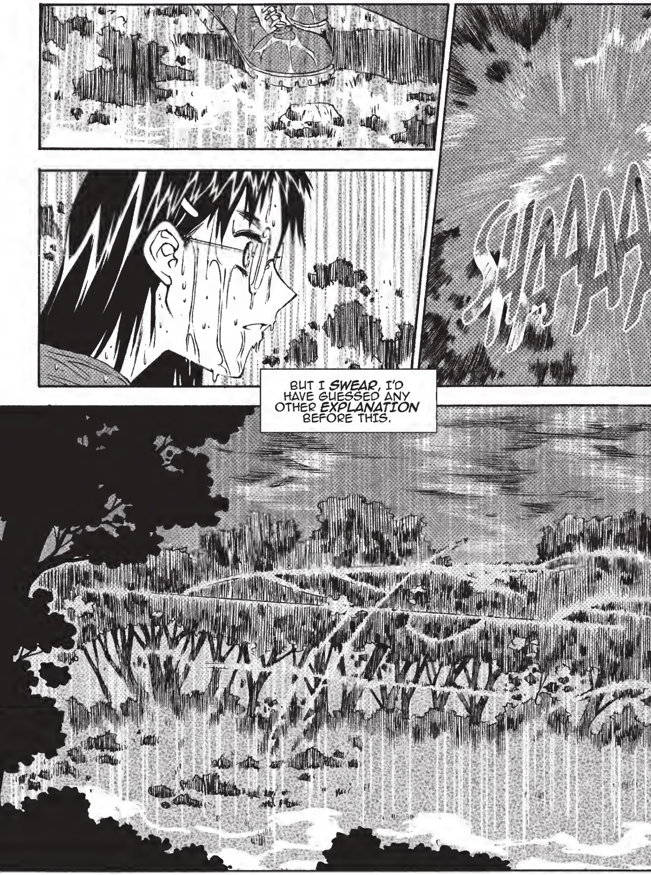

THAT'S RIDICULOUS. *MAYBE* HE GOT KNOCKED ON THE HEAD WHEN *SHANE* CLOCKED HIM.
I HEARD ONCE THAT A *HEAD WOUND* CAN MAKE PEOPLE ACT *REALLY* WEIRD.
YEAH, THAT EXPLAINS WHY HE DIDN'T REMEMBER THAT HE'S *NEVER MET* HIS DAD!
IT WAS A COMPLETELY *INSANE* SUSPICION, BUT I COULDN'T MAKE IT GO AWAY.

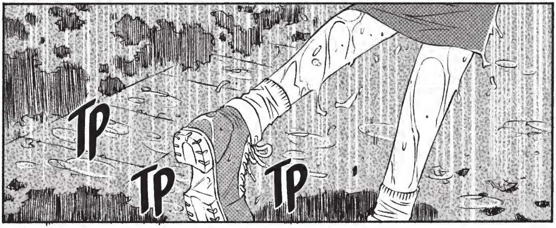

EXCUSE ME, MISS HAMMOND.
YES?
YOU KNOW JEREMY HATCHER, RIGHT? IS HE HAVING ANY *TROUBLES* THAT YOU MIGHT BE AWARE OF?
*JEM*? MAYBE. WHY?
IT'S JUST THAT HE'S *BEEN* HAVING A LITTLE ATTITUDE PROBLEM LATELY.
Jeremy Hatcher
UP YOURS!
IT'S JUST NOT LIKE HIM.
NO KIDDING.

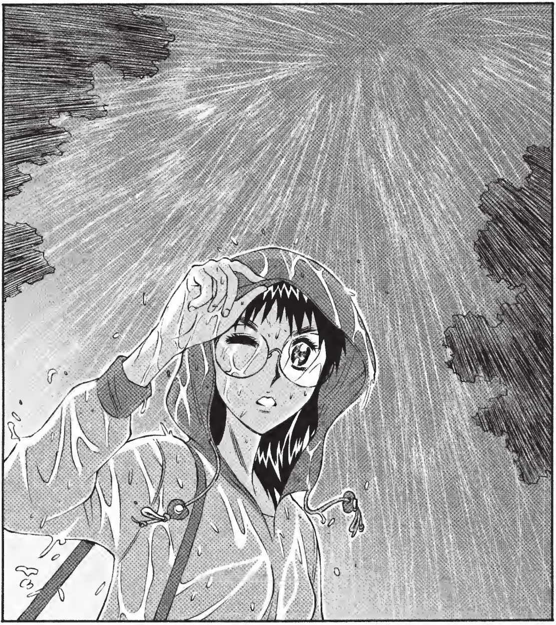

I TOLD JEM I COULDN'T MEET HIM THAT EVENING BECAUSE I WAS WASHING MY HAIR.
WHOEVER THIS PERSON WAS, HE WASN'T MY JEM.
HE ACTUALLY BOUGHT IT. BY THEN, I WAS ABSOLUTELY SURE.
HE WAS AN IMPOSTOR.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW OR WHY. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW I COULD BE SO SURE OF SOMETHING SO ABSOLUTELY UNLIKELY.


BUT INSTINCTS I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I HAD WERE TELLING ME NOT TO BELIEVE MY *OWN* EYES.
BLEEP

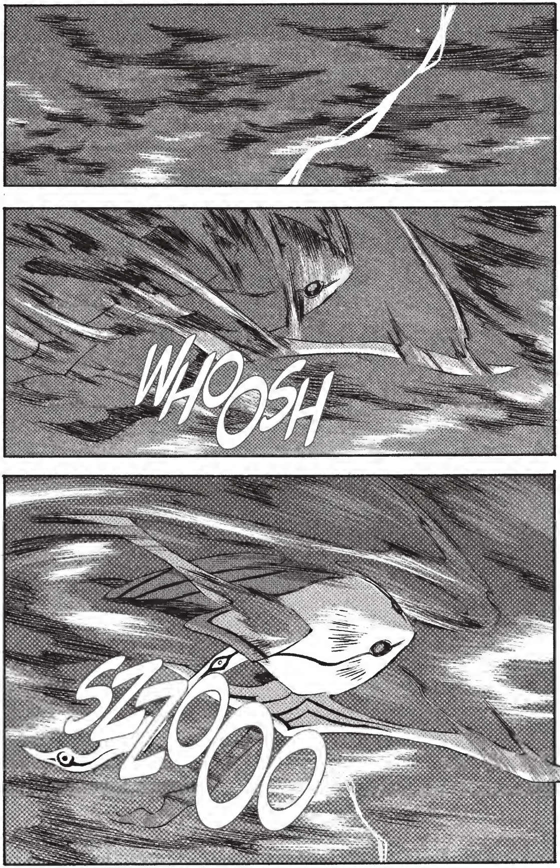

HWWWN

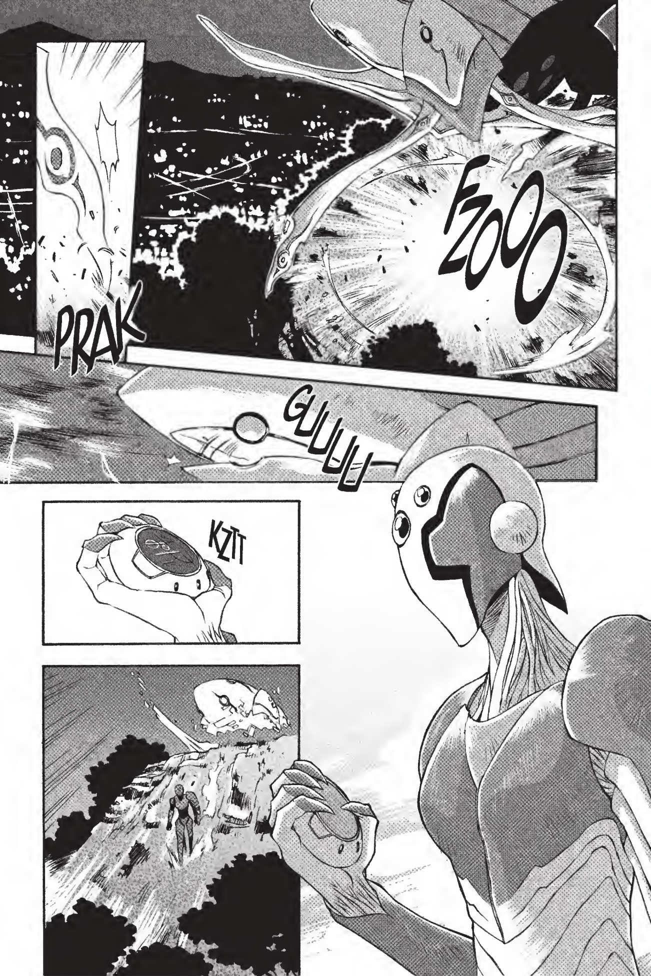

SHAAAA
BUT I *SWEAR*, I'D HAVE GUESSED ANY OTHER *EXPLANATION* BEFORE THIS.

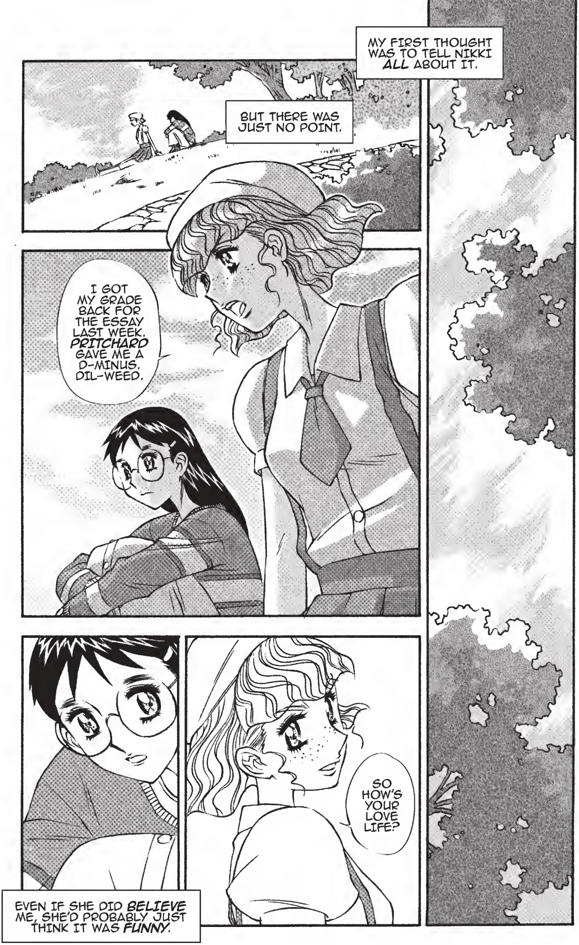

TP
TP
TP

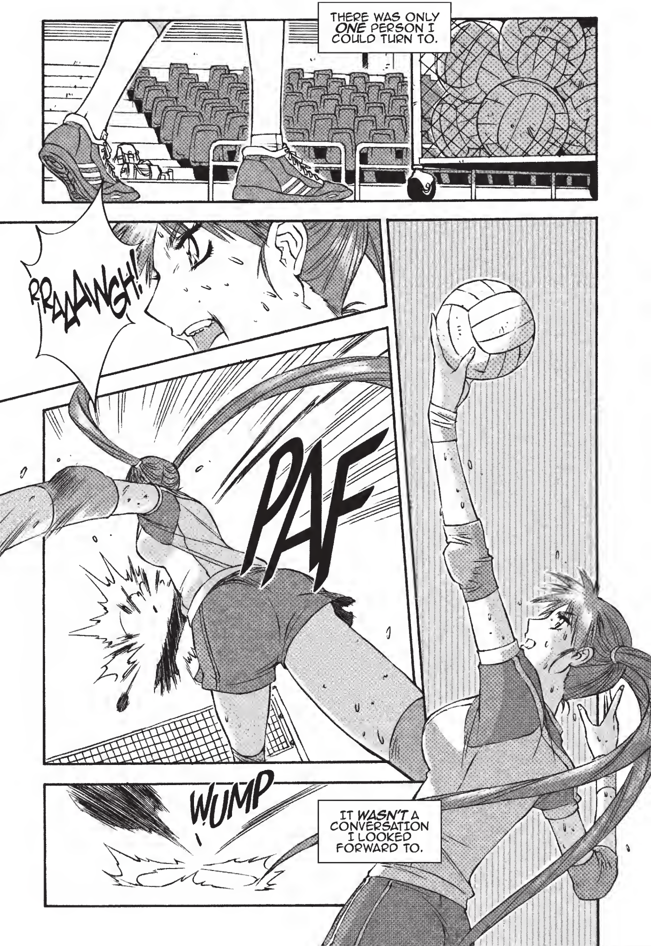


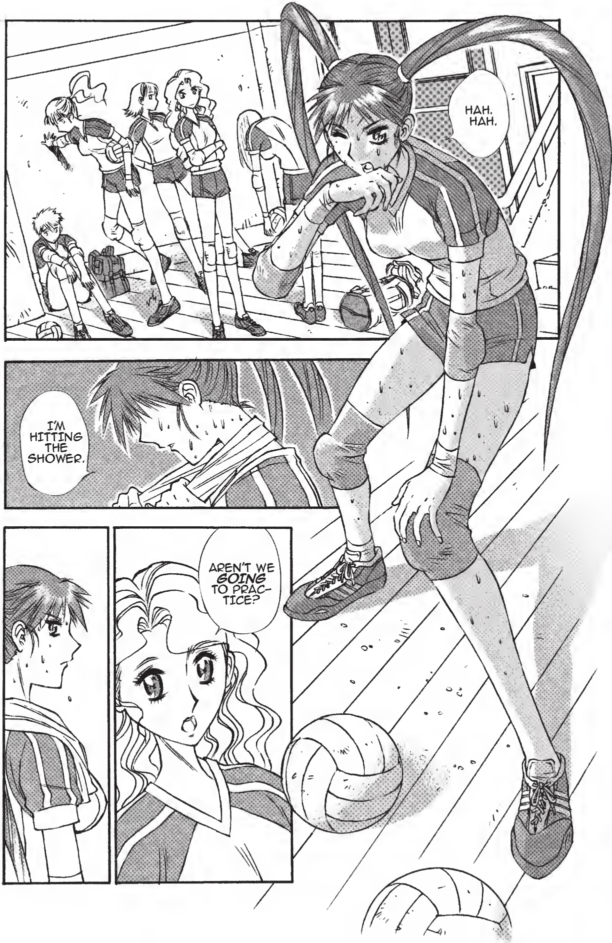
# UNEARTHLY chapter 5

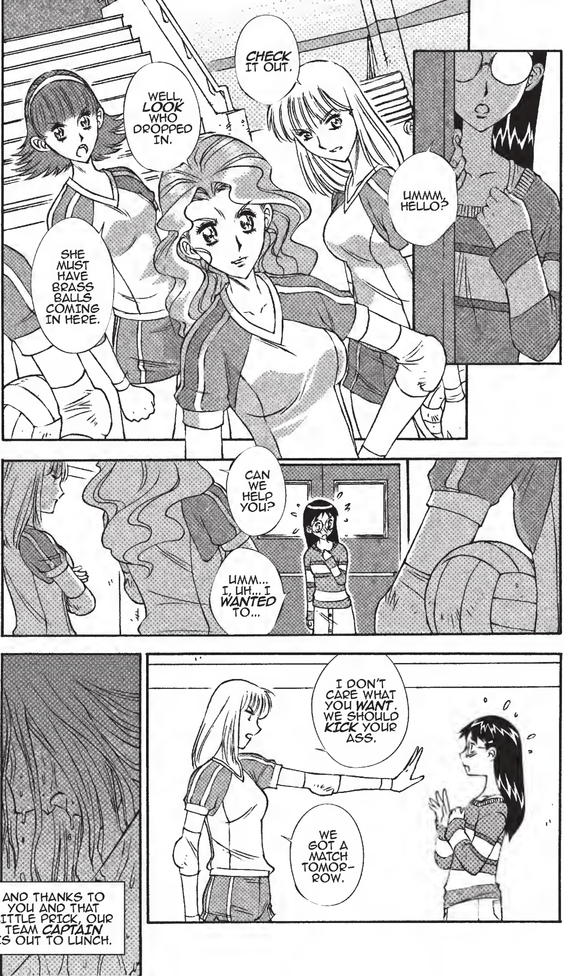

WHOOSH
SZZOOO

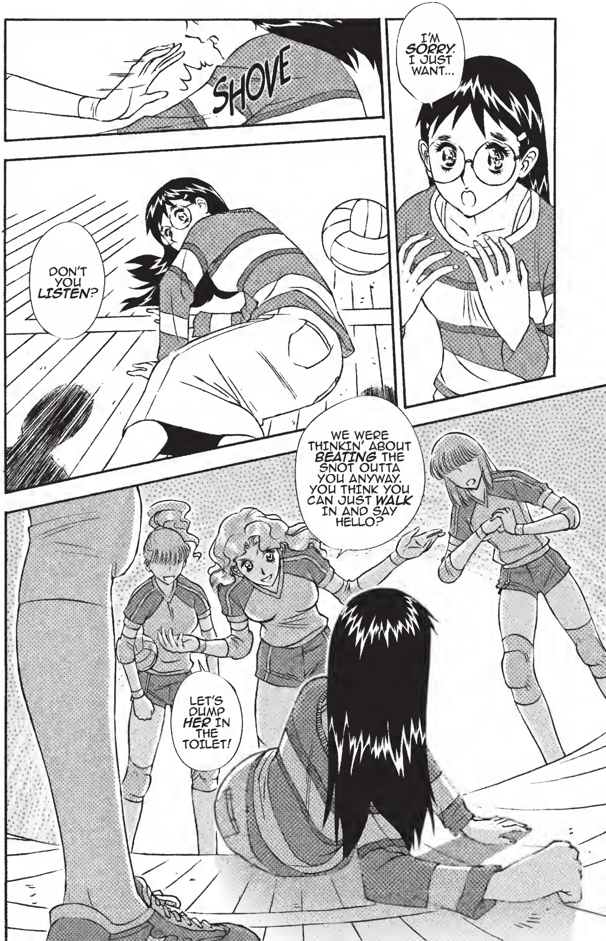

FZOOO
PRAK
GUUUU
KZTT

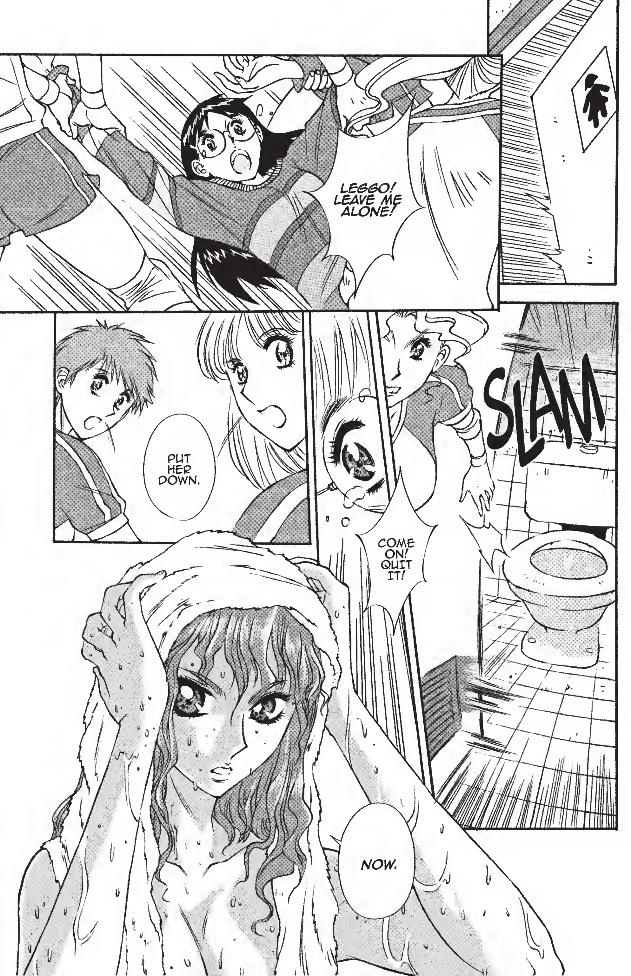

MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS TO TELL NIKKI ***ALL*** ABOUT IT.
BUT THERE WAS JUST NO POINT.
I GOT MY GRADE BACK FOR THE ESSAY LAST WEEK. ***PRITCHARD*** GAVE ME A D-MINUS, DIL-WEED.
SO HOW'S YOUR LOVE LIFE?
EVEN IF SHE DID ***BELIEVE*** ME, SHE'D PROBABLY JUST THINK IT WAS ***FUNNY***.

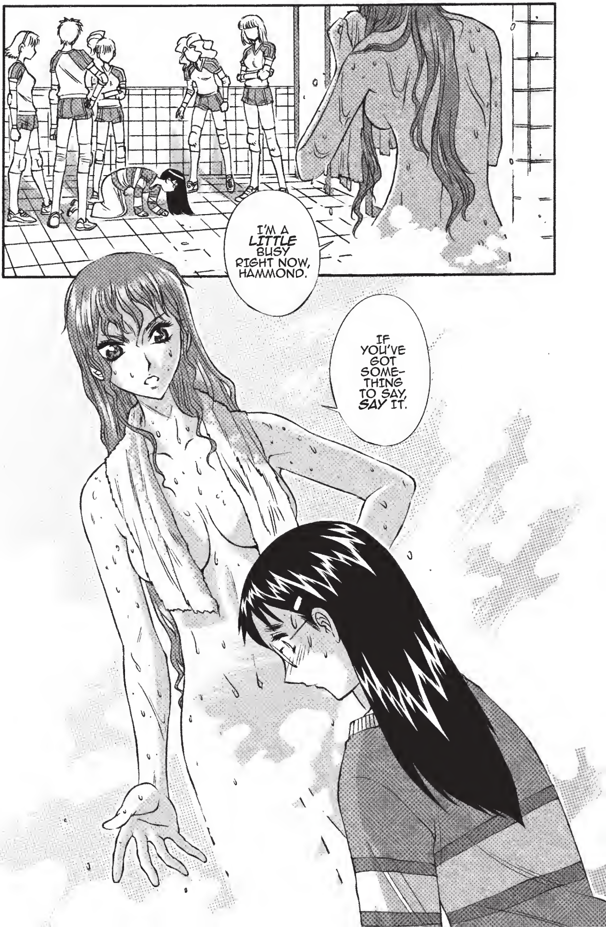

THERE WAS ONLY *ONE* PERSON I COULD TURN TO.
RRAAAWGH!
PAF
WUMP
IT *WASN'T* A CONVERSATION I LOOKED FORWARD TO.

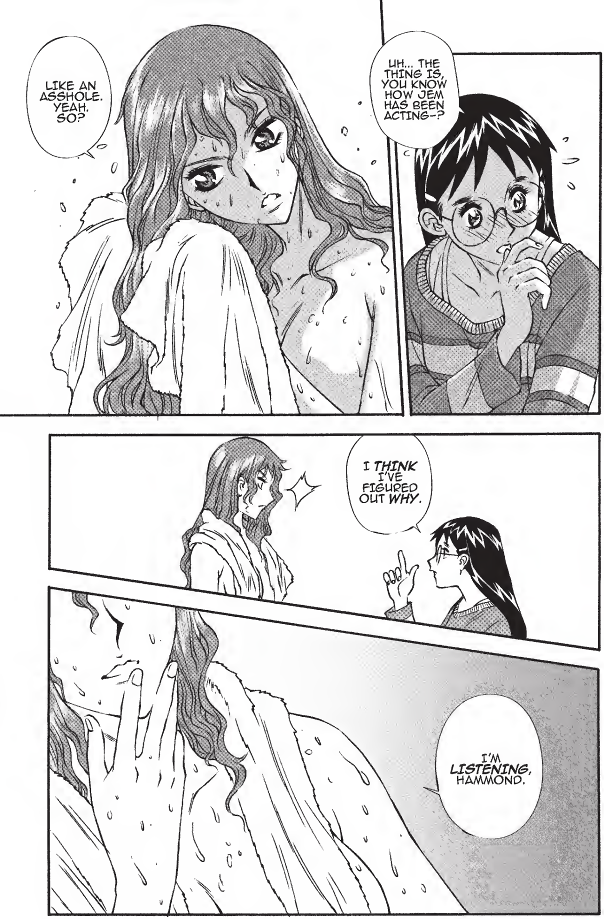

HAH. HAH.
I'M HITTING THE SHOWER.
AREN'T WE *GOING* TO PRACTICE?

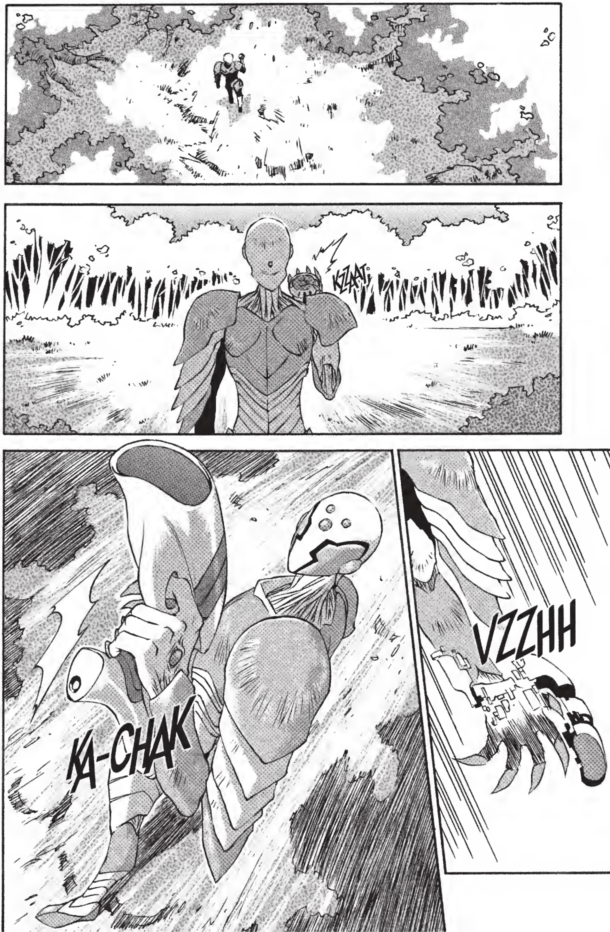

CHECK IT OUT.
WELL, LOOK WHO DROPPED IN.
SHE MUST HAVE BRASS BALLS COMING IN HERE.
UMMM, HELLO?
CAN WE HELP YOU?
UMM... I, UH... I WANTED TO...
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU WANT. WE SHOULD KICK YOUR ASS.
WE GOT A MATCH TOMORROW.
AND THANKS TO YOU AND THAT LITTLE PRICK, OUR TEAM CAPTAIN IS OUT TO LUNCH.

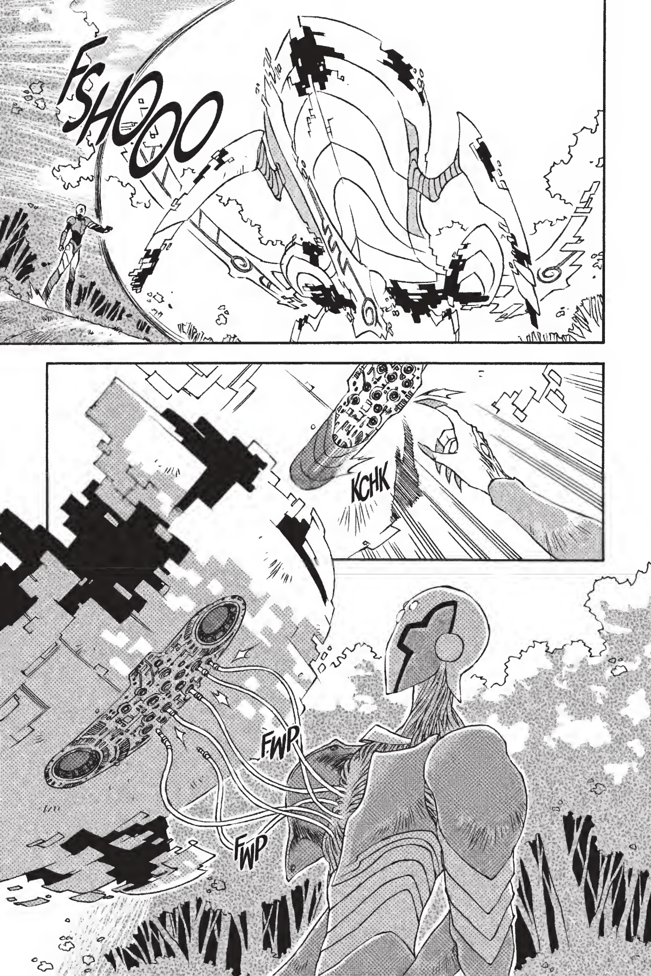

I'M *SORRY.* I JUST WANT...
SHOVE
DON'T YOU *LISTEN*?
WE WERE THINKIN' ABOUT *BEATING* THE SNOT OUTTA YOU ANYWAY. YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST *WALK* IN AND SAY HELLO?
LET'S DUMP *HER* IN THE TOILET!

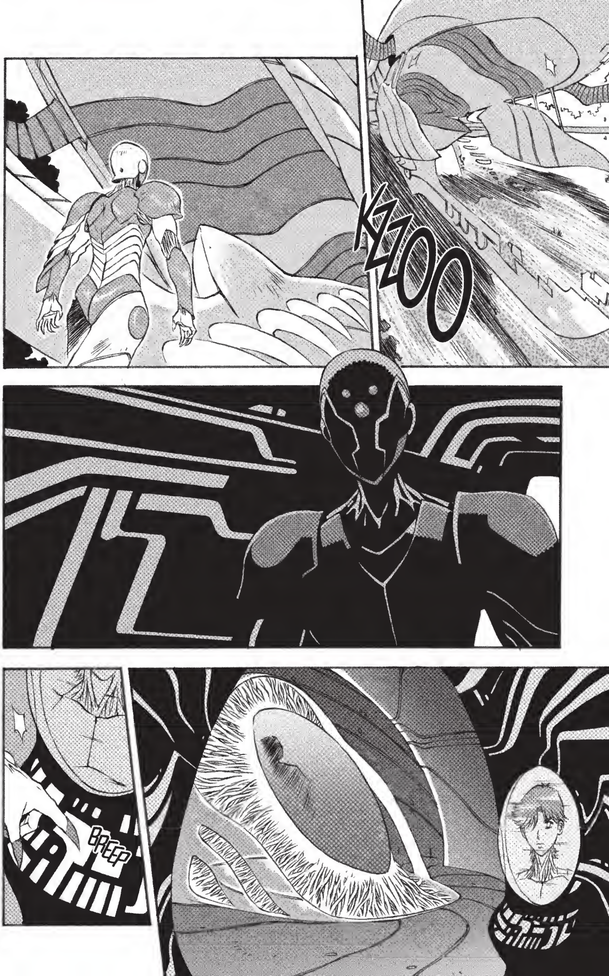

LEGGO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
SLAM
COME ON! QUIT IT!
PUT HER DOWN.
NOW.

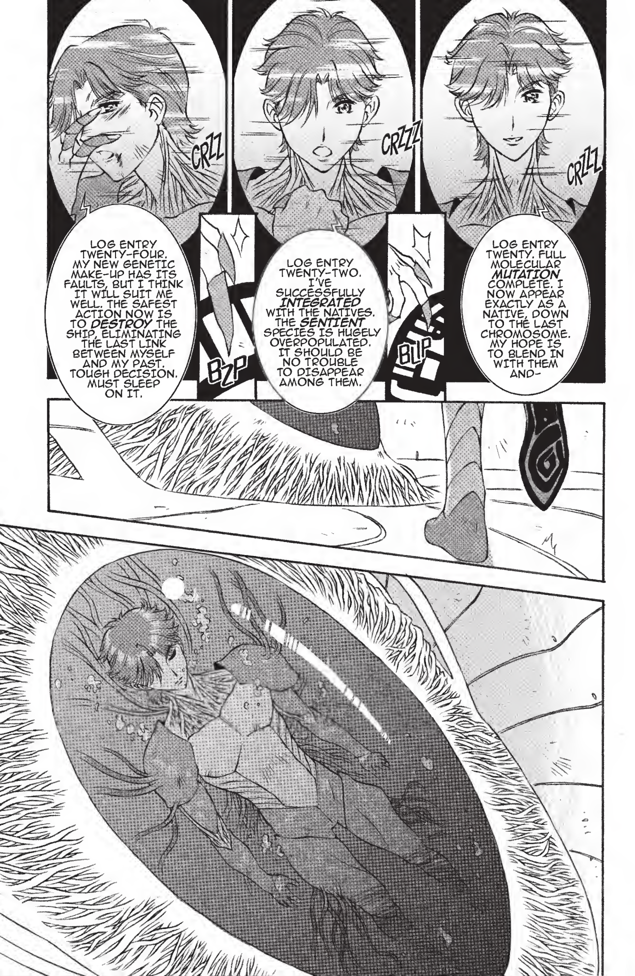

I'M A ***LITTLE*** BUSY RIGHT NOW, HAMMOND.
IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, ***SAY*** IT.

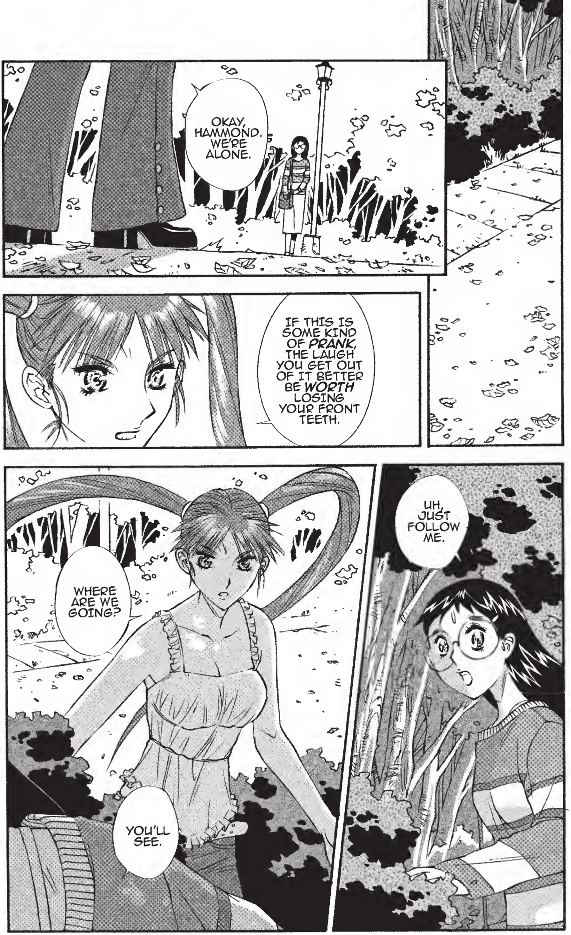

UH... THE THING IS, YOU KNOW HOW JEM HAS BEEN ACTING--?
LIKE AN ASSHOLE. YEAH. SO?
I *THINK* I'VE FIGURED OUT *WHY*.
I'M *LISTENING*, HAMMOND.

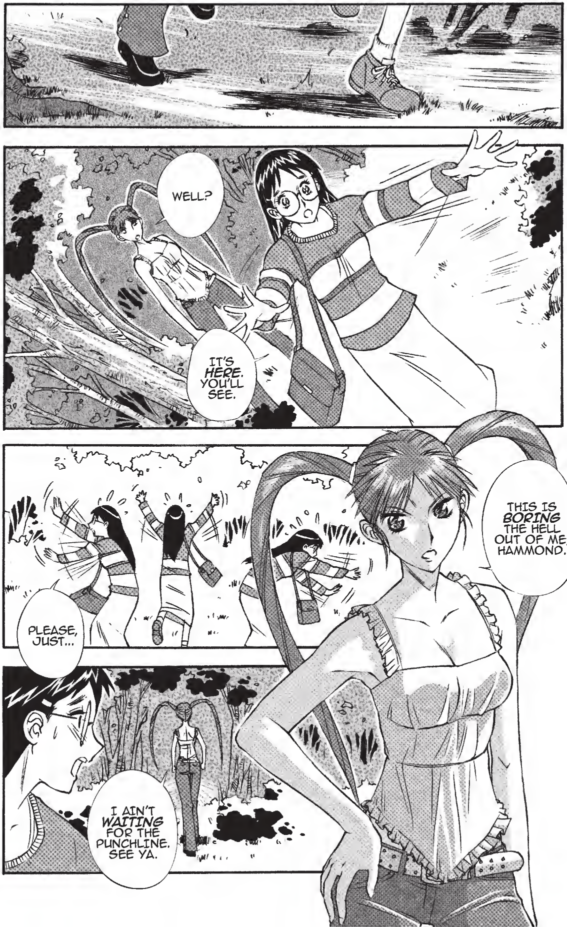

KZZAAT
KA-CHAK
VZZHH

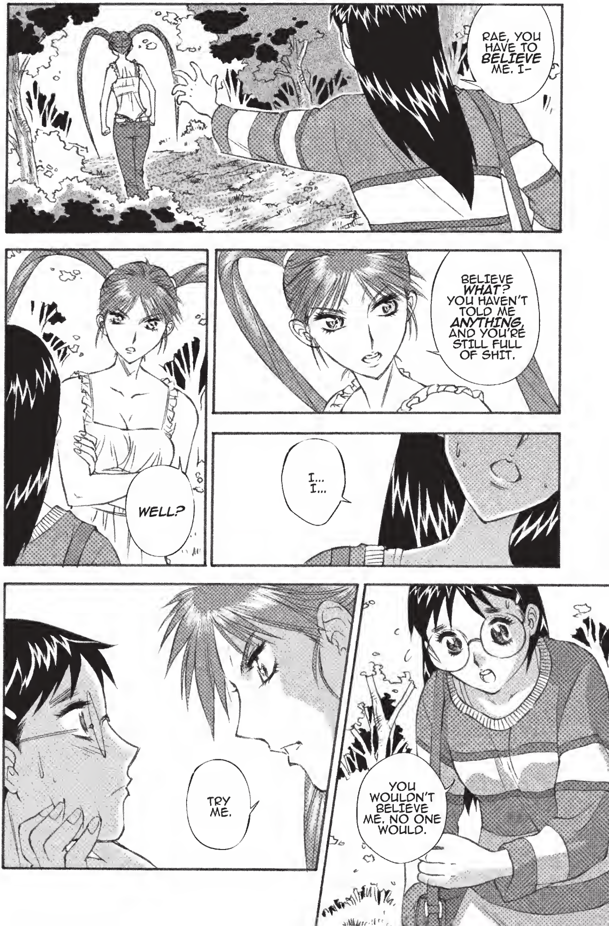

FSHOOO
KCHK
FWP
FWP

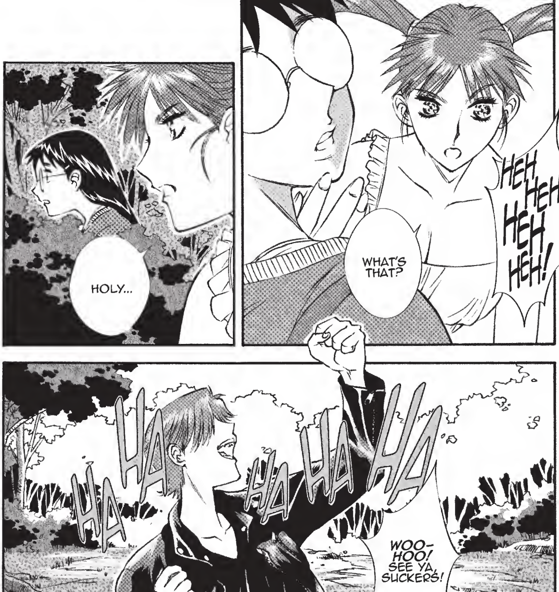

KZZOO
BREEP

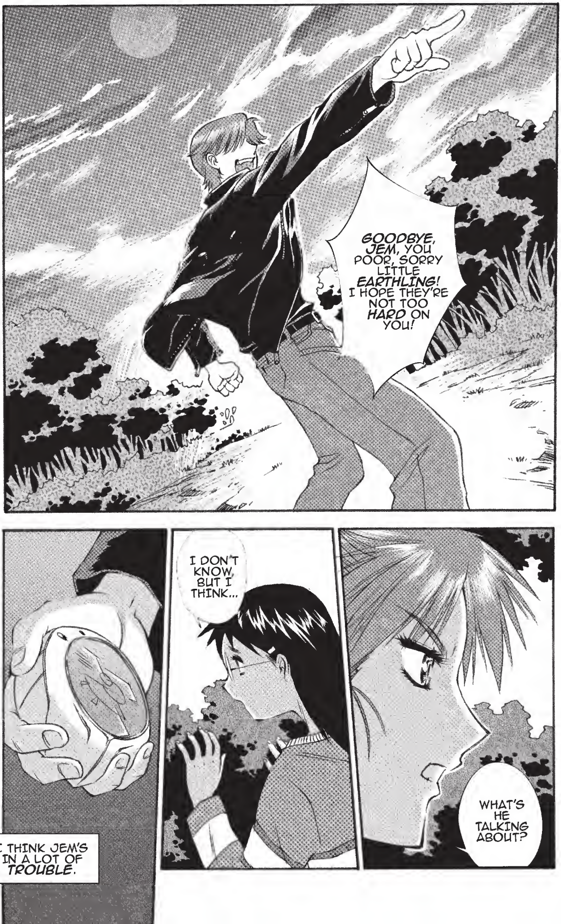

CRZZZ
CRZZZ
CRZZ
LOG ENTRY TWENTY. FULL MOLECULAR *MUTATION* COMPLETE. I NOW APPEAR EXACTLY AS A NATIVE, DOWN TO THE LAST CHROMOSOME. MY HOPE IS TO BLEND IN WITH THEM AND-
BLIP
LOG ENTRY TWENTY-TWO. I'VE SUCCESSFULLY *INTEGRATED* WITH THE NATIVES. THE *SENTIENT* SPECIES IS HUGELY OVERPOPULATED. IT SHOULD BE NO TROUBLE TO DISAPPEAR AMONG THEM.
BZP
LOG ENTRY TWENTY-FOUR. MY NEW GENETIC MAKE-UP HAS ITS FAULTS, BUT I THINK IT WILL SUIT ME WELL. THE SAFEST ACTION NOW IS TO *DESTROY* THE SHIP, ELIMINATING THE LAST LINK BETWEEN MYSELF AND MY PAST. TOUGH DECISION. MUST SLEEP ON IT.


OKAY, HAMMOND. WE'RE ALONE.
IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF *PRANK*, THE LAUGH YOU GET OUT OF IT BETTER BE *WORTH* LOSING YOUR FRONT TEETH.
UH, JUST FOLLOW ME.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
YOU'LL SEE.


WELL?
IT'S *HERE*. YOU'LL SEE.
THIS IS *BORING* THE HELL OUT OF ME, HAMMOND.
PLEASE, JUST...
I AIN'T *WAITING* FOR THE PUNCHLINE. SEE YA.

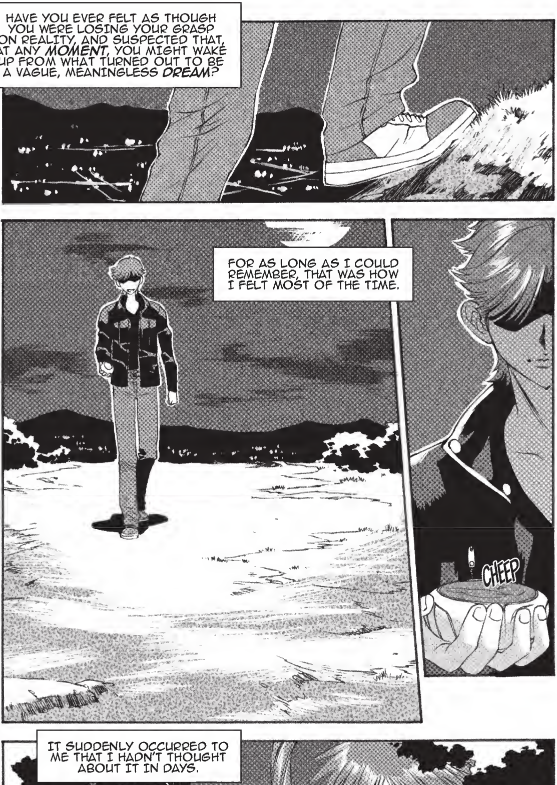

RAE, YOU HAVE TO *BELIEVE* ME. I-
BELIEVE *WHAT?* YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME *ANYTHING,* AND YOU'RE STILL FULL OF SHIT.
*WELL?*
I... I...
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME. NO ONE WOULD.
TRY ME.

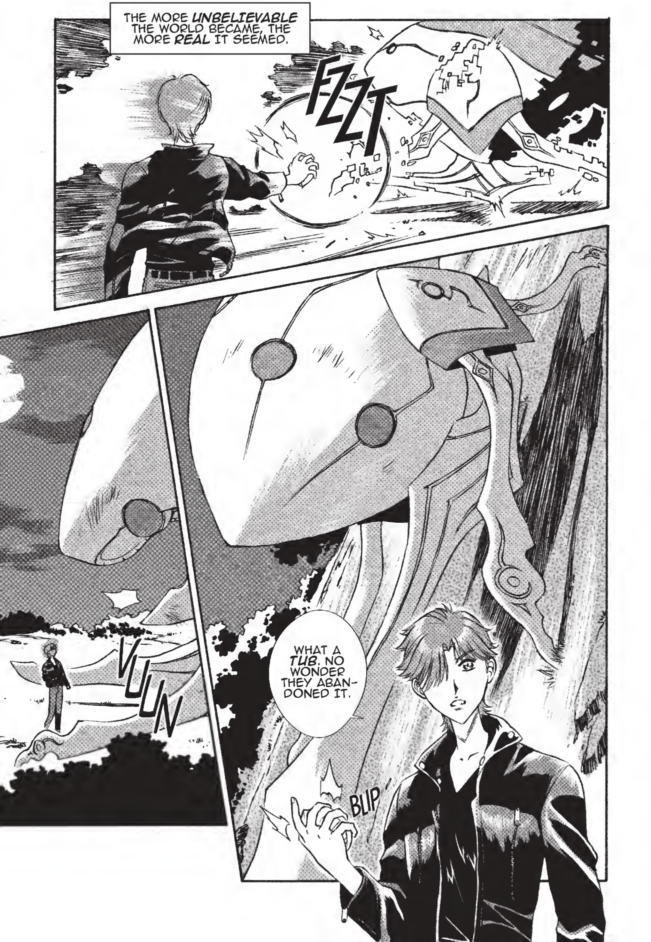

HEH HEH HEH HEH!
WHAT'S THAT?
HOLY...
HA HA HA HA HA HA
WOO-HOO! SEE YA, SUCKERS!
IS THAT JEM?
THAT'S JUST THE THING. I DON'T THINK IT IS.

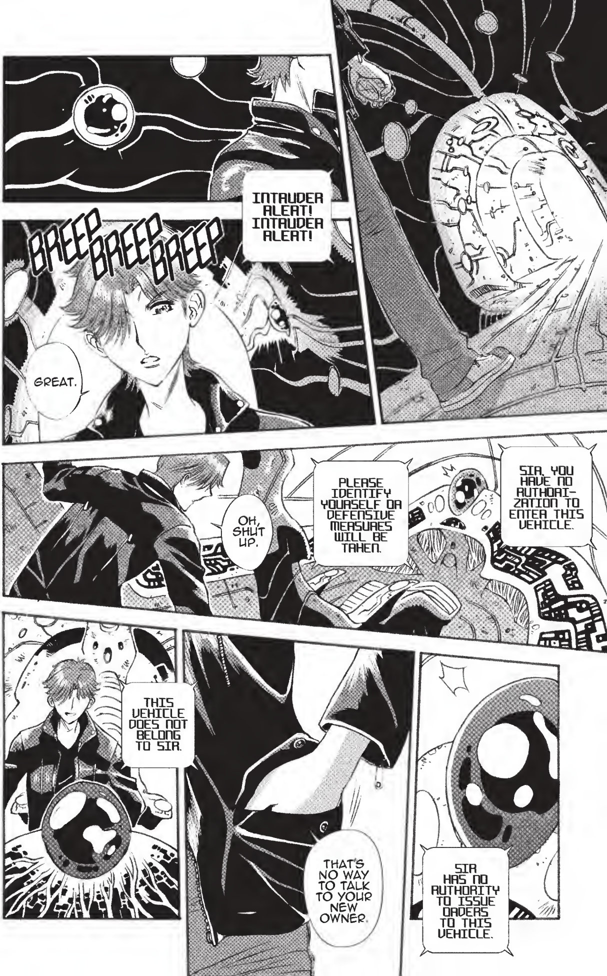

GOODBYE, JEM, YOU POOR, SORRY LITTLE EARTHLING! I HOPE THEY'RE NOT TOO HARD ON YOU!
WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I THINK...
I THINK JEM'S IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.

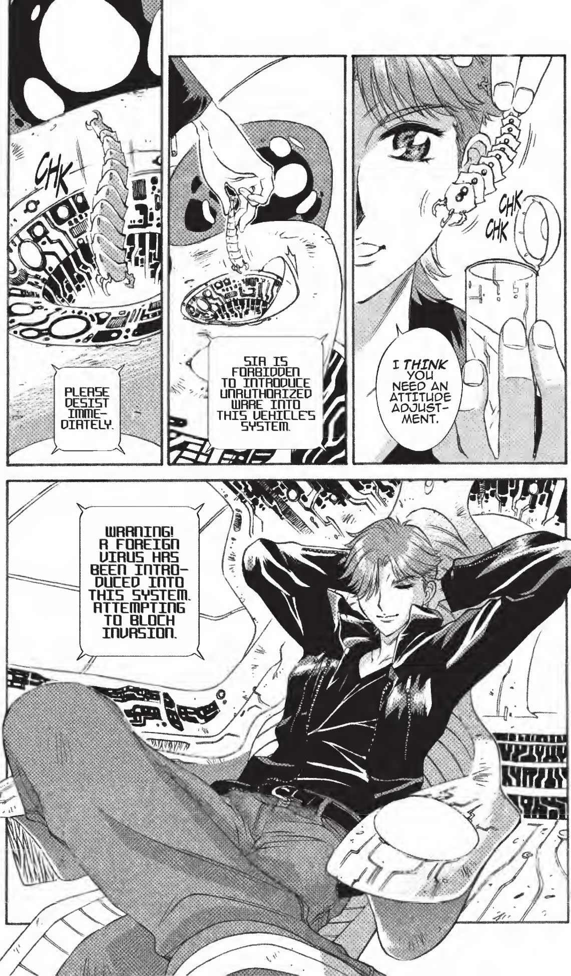
UNEARTHLY

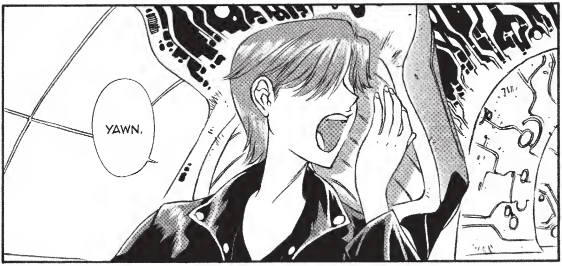
# chapter 6

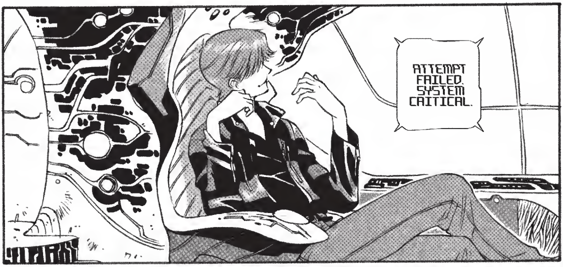

HAVE YOU EVER FELT AS THOUGH YOU WERE LOSING YOUR GRASP ON REALITY, AND SUSPECTED THAT, AT ANY *MOMENT*, YOU MIGHT WAKE UP FROM WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE A VAGUE, MEANINGLESS *DREAM*?
FOR AS LONG AS I COULD REMEMBER, THAT WAS HOW I FELT MOST OF THE TIME.
CHEEP
IT SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ME THAT I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT IN DAYS.

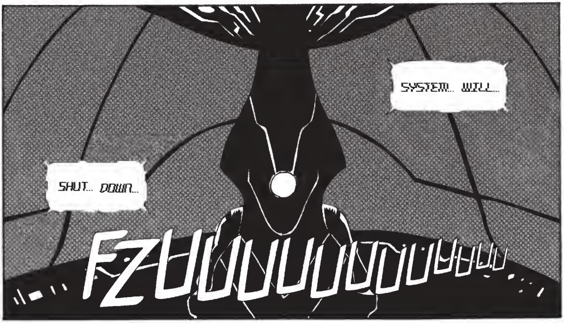

THE MORE *UNBELIEVABLE* THE WORLD BECAME, THE MORE *REAL* IT SEEMED.
FZZT
VUUN
WHAT A *TUB*. NO WONDER THEY ABANDONED IT.
BLIP

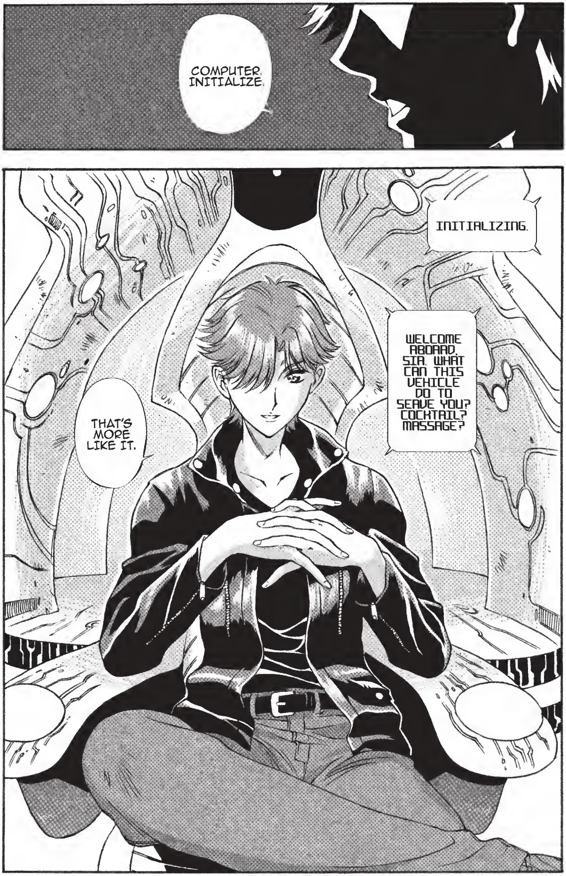

INTRUDER ALERT! INTRUDER ALERT!
BREEP BREEP BREEP
GREAT.
SIR, YOU HAVE NO AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER THIS VEHICLE.
PLEASE IDENTIFY YOURSELF OR DEFENSIVE MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN.
OH, SHUT UP.
THIS VEHICLE DOES NOT BELONG TO SIR.
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO YOUR NEW OWNER.
SIR HAS NO AUTHORITY TO ISSUE ORDERS TO THIS VEHICLE.

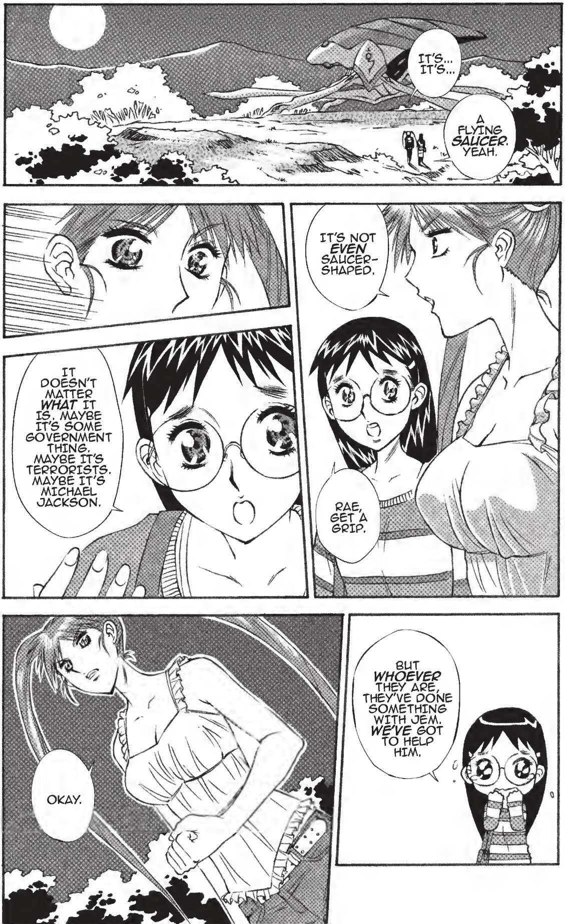

CHK
PLEASE DESIST IMMEDIATELY.
SIA IS FORBIDDEN TO INTRODUCE UNAUTHORIZED WARE INTO THIS VEHICLE'S SYSTEM.
CHK CHK
I *THINK* YOU NEED AN ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT.
WARNING! A FOREIGN VIRUS HAS BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THIS SYSTEM. ATTEMPTING TO BLOCK INVASION.

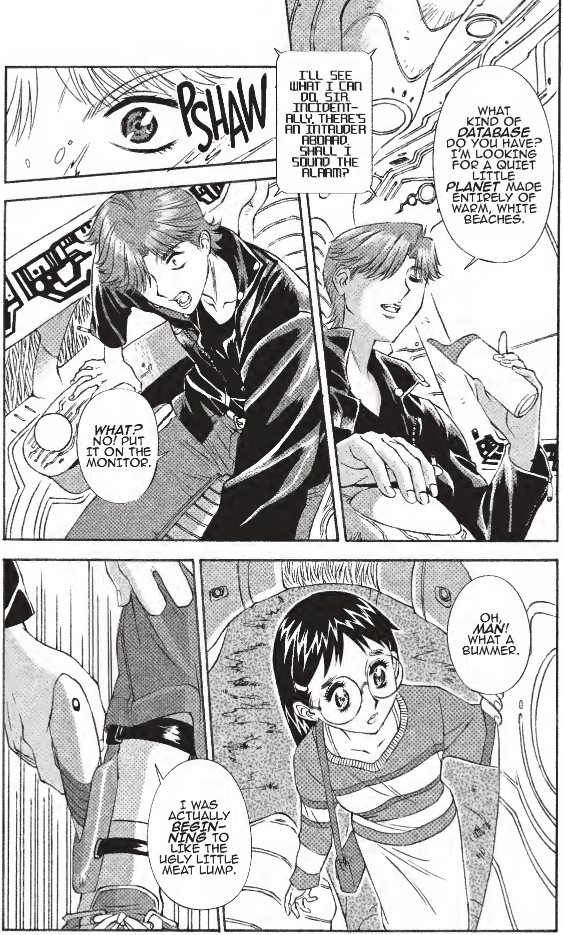

YAWN.

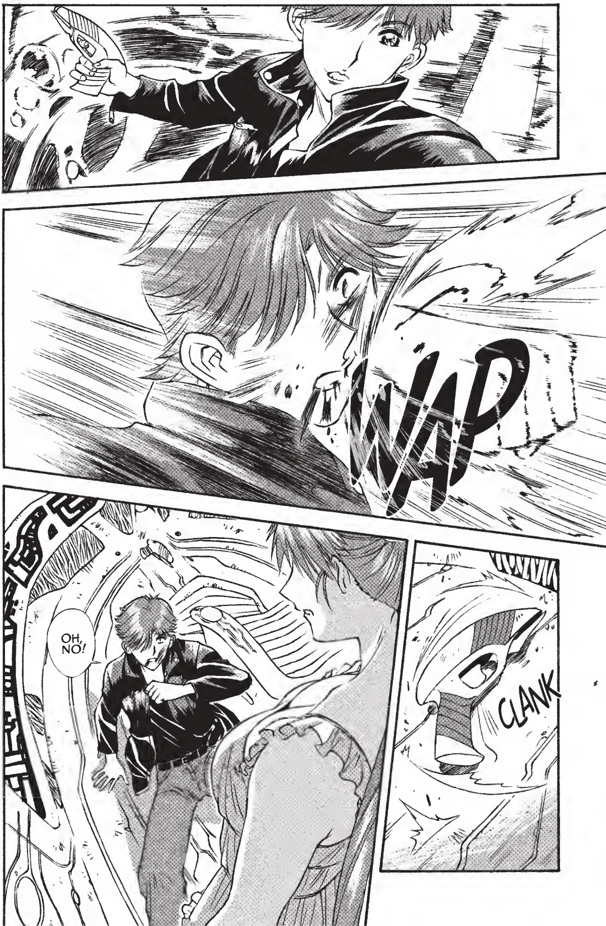

ATTEMPT FAILED. SYSTEM CRITICAL.

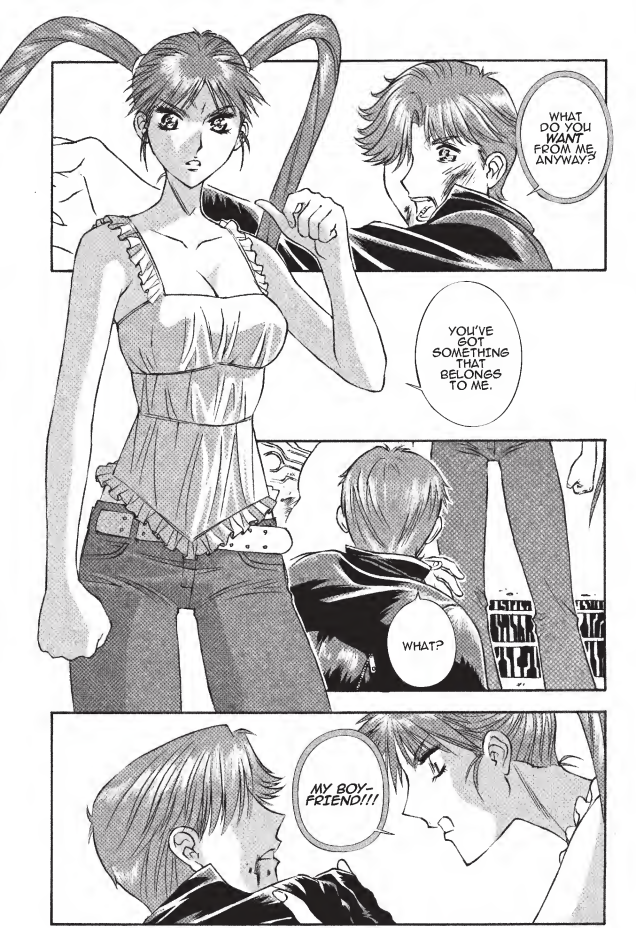

SYSTEM... WILL...
SHUT... DOWN...
FZUUUUUUUUUUUUU

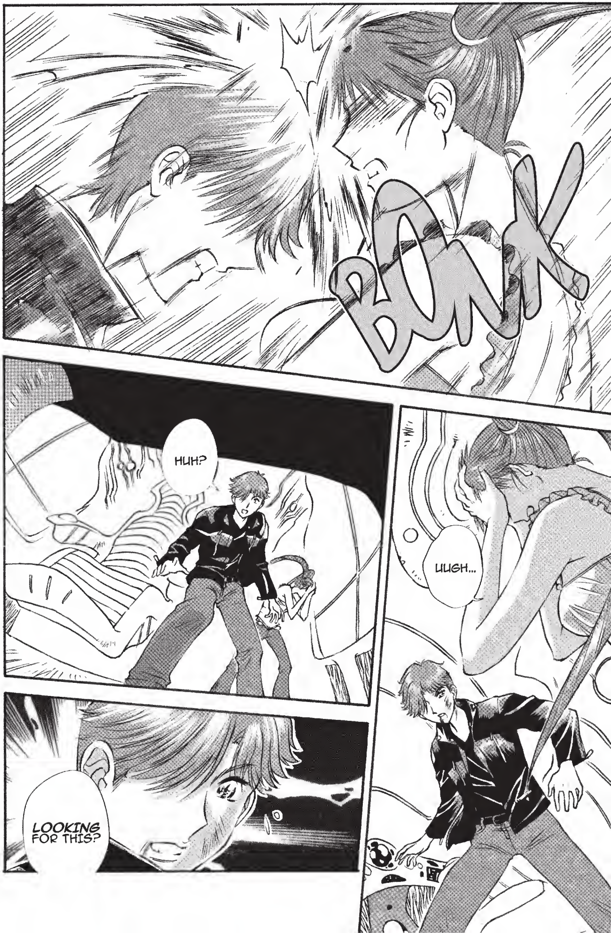

COMPUTER. INITIALIZE.
INITIALIZING.
WELCOME ABOARD, SIR. WHAT CAN THIS VEHICLE DO TO SERVE YOU? COCKTAIL? MASSAGE?
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.

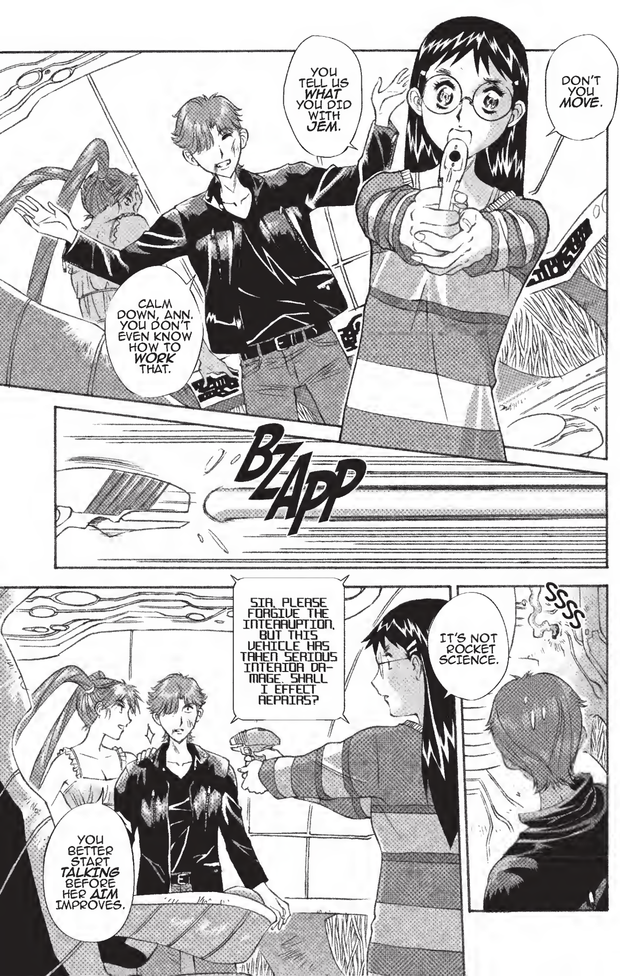

IT'S... IT'S...
A FLYING *SAUCER*. YEAH.
IT'S NOT *EVEN* SAUCER-SHAPED.
RAE, GET A GRIP.
IT DOESN'T MATTER *WHAT* IT IS. MAYBE IT'S SOME GOVERNMENT THING. MAYBE IT'S TERRORISTS. MAYBE IT'S MICHAEL JACKSON.
BUT *WHOEVER* THEY ARE, THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING WITH JEM. *WE'VE* GOT TO HELP HIM.
OKAY.

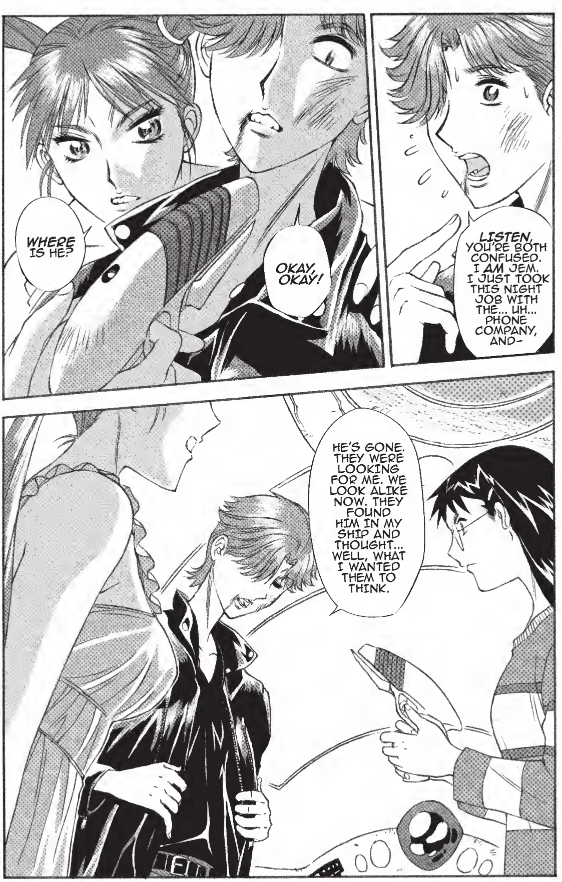

WHAT KIND OF *DATABASE* DO YOU HAVE? I'M LOOKING FOR A QUIET LITTLE *PLANET* MADE ENTIRELY OF WARM, WHITE BEACHES.
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO, SIR. INCIDENTALLY, THERE'S AN INTRUDER ABOARD. SHALL I SOUND THE ALARM?
PSHAW
*WHAT?* NO! PUT IT ON THE MONITOR.
OH, *MAN!* WHAT A BUMMER.
I WAS ACTUALLY *BEGINNING* TO LIKE THE UGLY LITTLE MEAT LUMP.

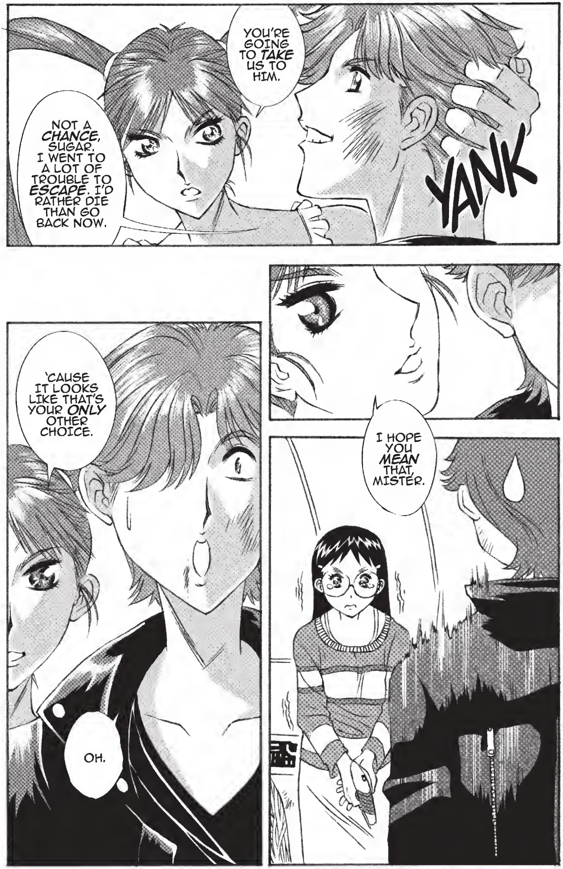

WAP
OH, NO!
CLANK

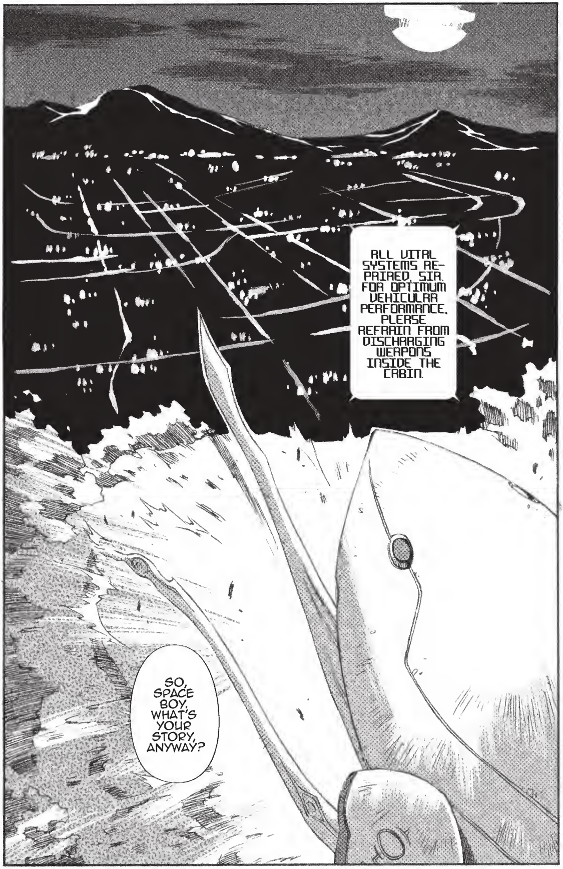

WHAT DO YOU *WANT* FROM ME, ANYWAY?
YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO ME.
WHAT?
*MY BOY-FRIEND!!!*

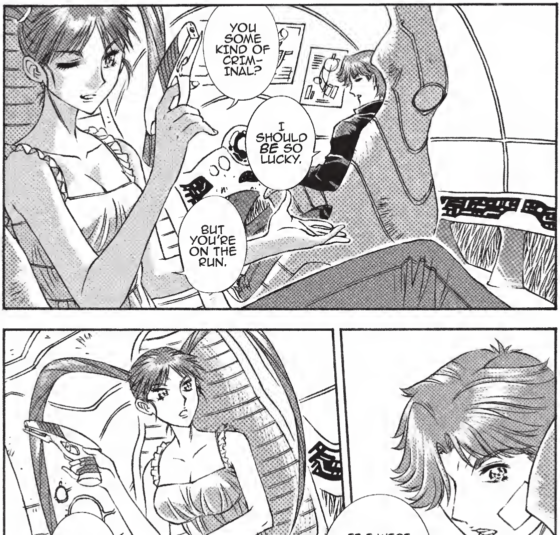

BONK
UUGH...
HUH?
LOOKING FOR THIS?

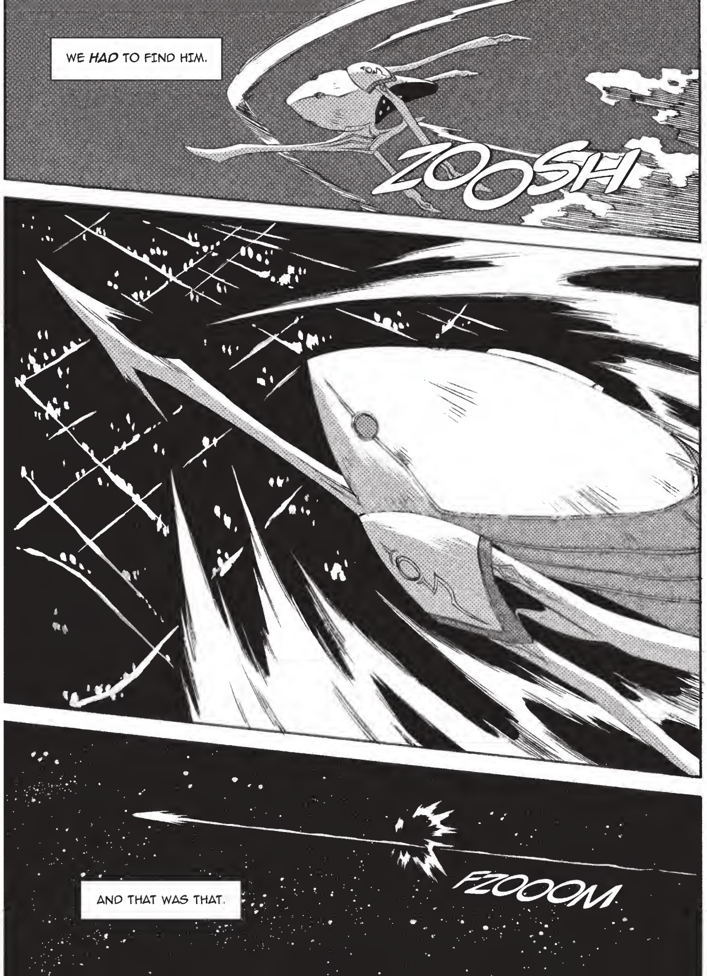

YOU TELL US *WHAT* YOU DID WITH *JEM*.
DON'T YOU *MOVE*.
CALM DOWN, ANN. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO *WORK* THAT.
BZAPP
SIR, PLEASE FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION, BUT THIS VEHICLE HAS TAKEN SERIOUS INTERIOR DAMAGE. SHALL I EFFECT REPAIRS?
IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE.
SSSS
YOU BETTER START *TALKING* BEFORE HER *AIM* IMPROVES.

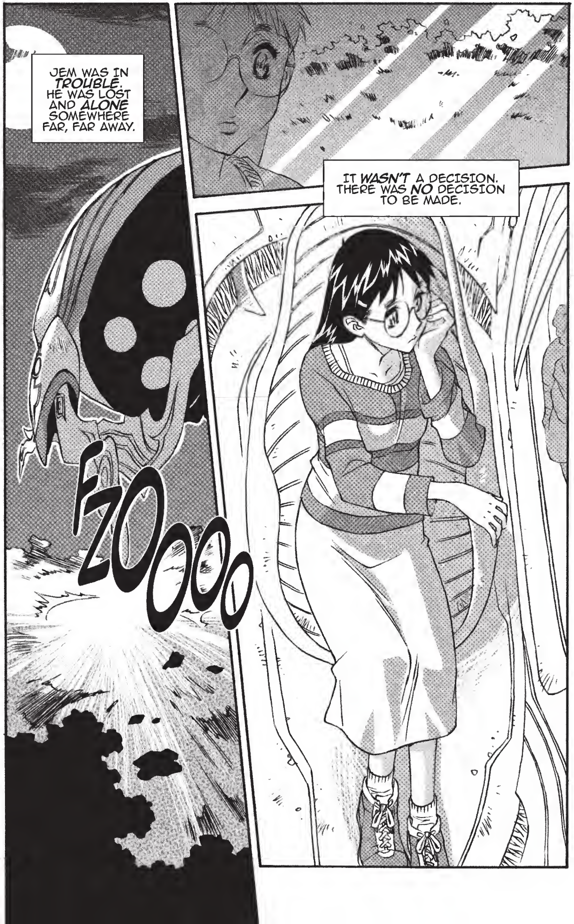

WHERE IS HE?
OKAY, OKAY!
LISTEN, YOU'RE BOTH CONFUSED. I AM JEM. I JUST TOOK THIS NIGHT JOB WITH THE... UH... PHONE COMPANY, AND-
HE'S GONE. THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ME. WE LOOK ALIKE NOW. THEY FOUND HIM IN MY SHIP AND THOUGHT... WELL, WHAT I WANTED THEM TO THINK.

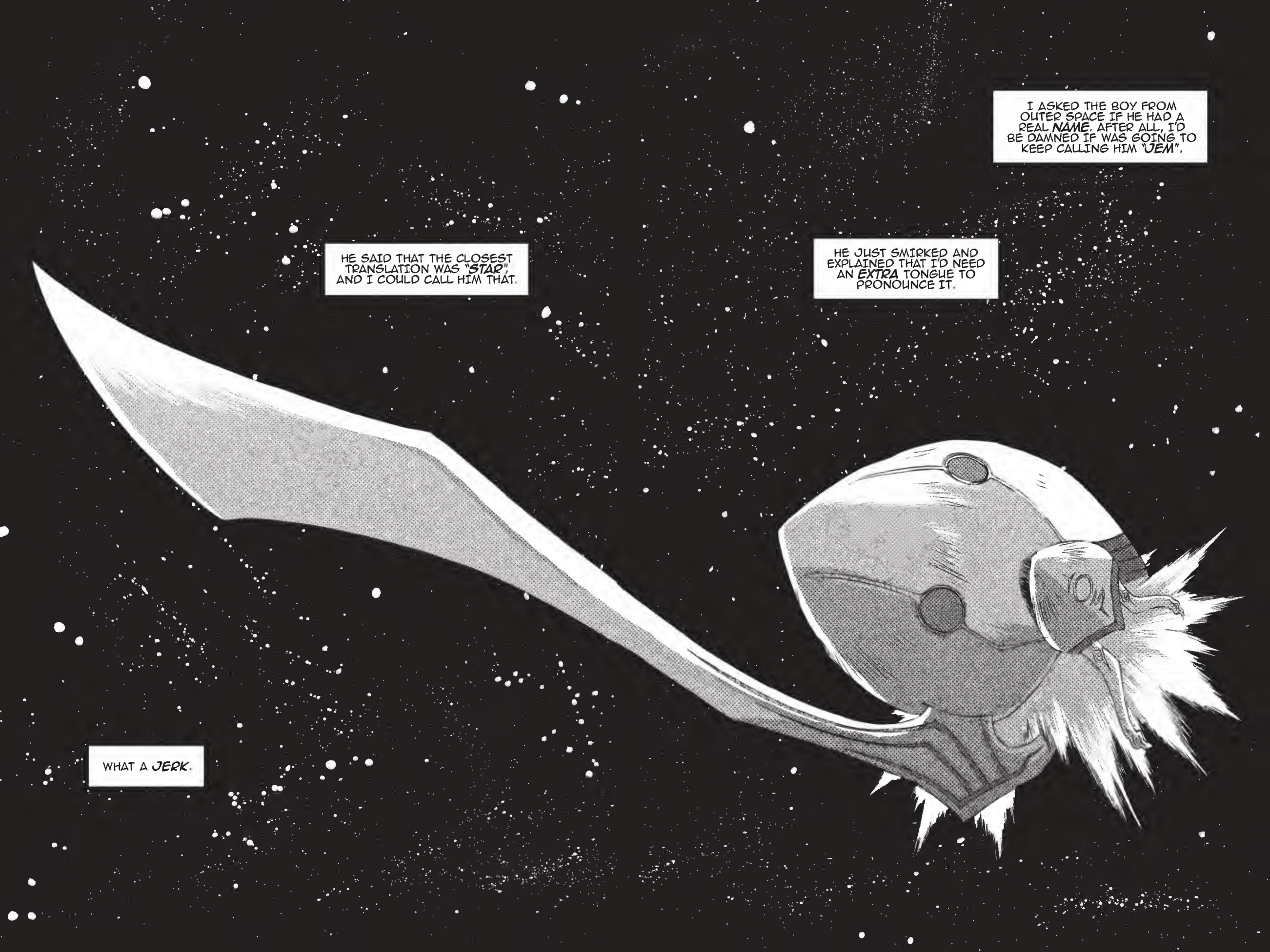

YOU'RE GOING TO *TAKE* US TO HIM.
NOT A *CHANCE*, SUGAR. I WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE TO *ESCAPE*. I'D RATHER DIE THAN GO BACK NOW.
YANK
I HOPE YOU *MEAN* THAT, MISTER.
'CAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE THAT'S YOUR *ONLY* OTHER CHOICE.
OH.


ALL VITAL SYSTEMS REPAIRED, SIR. FOR OPTIMUM VEHICULAR PERFORMANCE, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM DISCHARGING WEAPONS INSIDE THE CABIN.
SO, SPACE BOY, WHAT'S YOUR STORY, ANYWAY?


YOU SOME KIND OF CRIMINAL?
I SHOULD *BE* SO LUCKY.
BUT YOU'RE ON THE RUN.
WHAT ARE YOU THEN?
IF I WERE JUST SOME PETTY THIEF OR MURDERER, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE CHASED ME THIS FAR.
I'M A ***KING***.


WE *HAD* TO FIND HIM.
ZOOSH
AND THAT WAS THAT.
FZOOOM

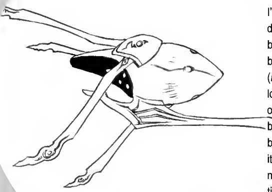

JEM WAS IN *TROUBLE*. HE WAS LOST AND *ALONE* SOMEWHERE FAR, FAR AWAY.
IT *WASN'T* A DECISION. THERE WAS *NO* DECISION TO BE MADE.
FZOOOO


I ASKED THE BOY FROM OUTER SPACE IF HE HAD A REAL *NAME*. AFTER ALL, I'D BE DAMNED IF WAS GOING TO KEEP CALLING HIM *"JEM"*.
HE JUST SMIRKED AND EXPLAINED THAT I'D NEED AN *EXTRA* TONGUE TO PRONOUNCE IT.
HE SAID THAT THE CLOSEST TRANSLATION WAS *"STAR"* AND I COULD CALL HIM THAT.
WHAT A *JERK*.

# UNEARTHLY

# Going Against the Grain

The concept of genre has always seemed a bit alien to me. Maybe because I enjoy all kinds of stories in all kinds of genres, and I don't really see any essential difference. It's like saying the blue car is completely different from the pink one. Who cares? They can both take you somewhere you've never been before.



I've often found stories that adhere strictly to one genre to be a little one-dimensional. I always knew where I was going, because I'd been there before. The kinds of stories I like best might be marketed as one genre, but ultimately, they encompass many. My favorite gangster movie (*Miller's Crossing*) is also something of a comedy. Or perhaps it's a tragic love triangle. Both of my favorite comic book series (Alan Moore's run on *Swamp Thing* and Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*) were called horror, but believe me, they were everything else besides. My favorite children's book (*C.S.* Lewis's *A Horse and His Boy*) was labeled 'fantasy.' Perhaps it is, but, at the end of the day, fantasy is just another label created and maintained by publishers and audiences to make the decision to invest time and money easier. Everybody likes to have some idea of where they're going, even if they end up somewhere else. With a nice signpost that says, "Fantasy, 200 pages," you never feel lost.

I love fantasy, but, I can tell you, I've been put to sleep by innumerable books released under that label. Genre is no guarantee of quality. What interests me is a writer's efforts to alter, blend or subvert genres, to show me a story from an angle I've never considered, to use the trappings of a genre to contradict that genre's typical messages and themes.

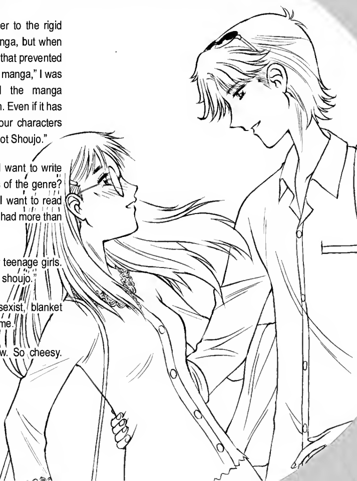
*Unearthly* was, perhaps unintentionally, created in answer to the rigid strictures of manga's traditional genres. I love shoujo manga, but when sitting down to write it, I found there were all kinds of rules that prevented me from taking the story in the direction I wanted. "Shoujo manga," I was told by American marketing experts who'd studied the manga phenomenon for six whole months, "can't be science fiction. Even if it has sci-fi elements, all shoujo must be set in high school. Your characters can't leave the school and go off into outer space. That's not Shoujo."

For a while, I began to really believe this. After all, did I want to write shoujo manga or not? Who was I to defy the conventions of the genre? And then I began to think, "When I was a kid, what did I want to read stories about? High school or outer space?" Ummm, duh! I had more than enough school in my life as it was.

The experts came back with, "Shoujo isn't *for* you. It's for teenage girls. Girls don't like space. If you want to write sci-fi, don't call it shoujo."

And what can you say to such a broad and, frankly sexist, blanket statement as that? "Go to hell," pretty much covered it for me.

The original title of this series was *Star Crossed*. I know. So cheesy. Thank goodness Jason DeAngelis liked *Unearthly* better.



**Ted Naifeh**
San Francisco, 2005

**Ted Naifeh** was once a starving artist just struggling to pay his rent, but overnight he became a comic sensation with throngs of fans swooning at his feet. Yep, you guessed it...Ted's an alien.

Ted first gained notoriety for his illustration work on the goth romance *Gloomcookie*, which he co-created with Serena Valentino, but it wasn't until he struck out on his own with *Courtney Crumrin and the Night Things* and its sequels, *Courtney Crumrin and the Coven of Mystics* and *Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom*, that Ted's spaceship truly came in. Written and illustrated by Ted, the *Courtney Crumrin* series has gone on to receive wide critical acclaim and has even earned two Eisner Award nominations.

Along with continuing his *Courtney Crumrin* saga and writing *Unearthly*, Ted Naifeh has also collaborated with Tristan Crane on the gritty and subversive graphic novel *How Loathsome*, recently illustrated the *Death, Jr.* mini-series for Image Comics, and is currently working on another new series entitled *Polly and the Pirates* for Oni Press.

## Ted Naifeh

## Elmer Damaso

**Elmer Damaso** crash-landed in the Philippines as a wee lad and spent his college years drawing cute girls in a bid to enslave humanity. After graduating, Elmer hooked up with some of his friends from the mother ship and together they pioneered their own manga company called Culture Crash.

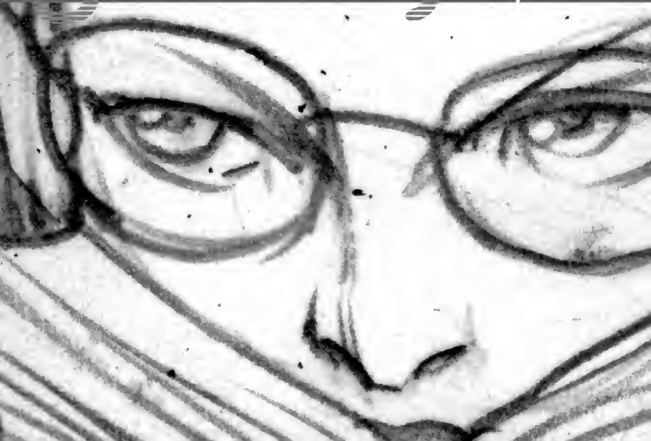
During his five-year stint in the business, Elmer developed his artistic techniques along with his friends and colleagues, and went on to cut his teeth on everything from magazine artwork to serialized stories and even worked as an anime character designer. Elmer is currently sailing aboard the Seven Seas ship with *Unearthly* being his first full-length shoujo manga series.

Even through Elmer has given up plans for world domination and lives happily in his quiet country home with his wife and eight-month-old son, he still holds out a glimmer of hope that he'll someday perfect his self-cloning device so that he'll finally be able to get more work done.

Following his success with the highly-acclaimed comic *Courtney Crumrin*, writer and artist extraordinaire, Ted Naifeh, dreamed up a little series called *Starcrossed*. Ted originally planned to script and illustrate the series himself. As the series morphed into *Unearthly*, Ted later agreed to write the series with manga-ka Elmer Damaso providing the art. Witness the evolution of... *Unearthly!*

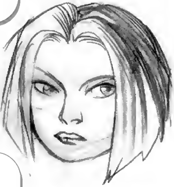
# gallery

## sketch pad

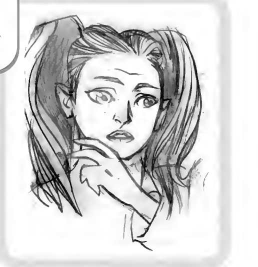


# sketch pad - ANN

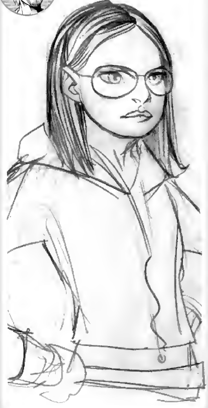
*"I was still feeling out the character here, and trying to avoid making her into an alterna-chick with two-toned hair. That's just too clichéd."*

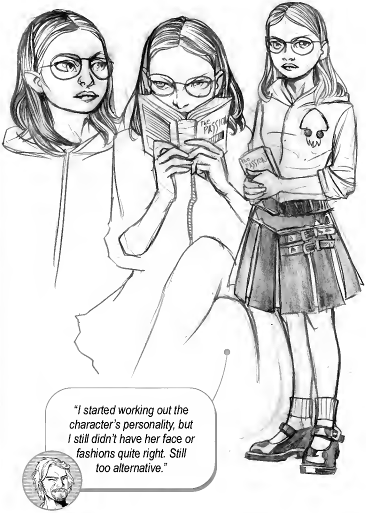


Ted's very first stab at Ann's design. Note the ponytails, which would go on to become Rae's signature trademark.



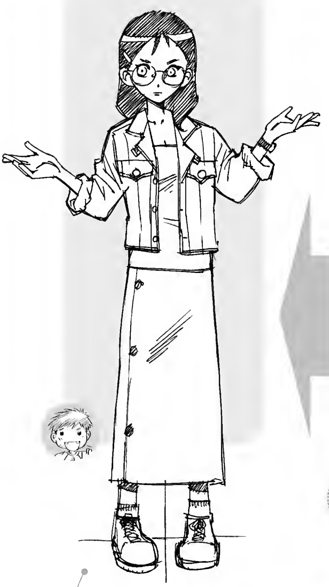
Ted's final Ann design.
*"I decided to go with a sort of teen Christina Ricci look with limp librarian hair. Very cute."*

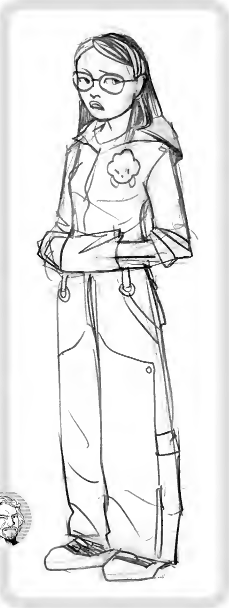




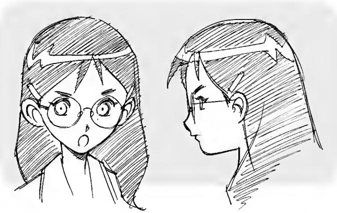
*"I started working out the character's personality, but I still didn't have her face or fashions quite right. Still too alternative."*

# sketch pad - ANN

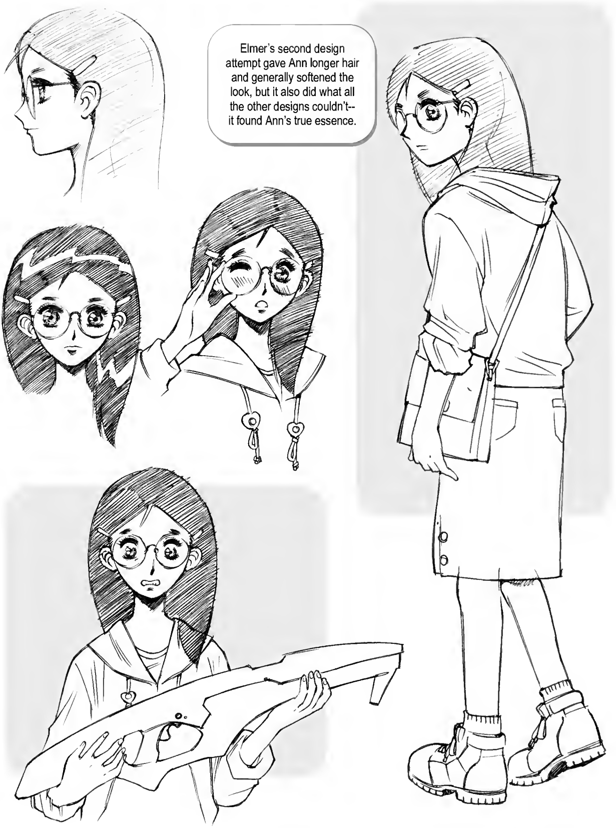




Elmer's initial character designs for Ann. Elmer was still transitioning his style from shounen manga to a shoujo flavor, so the characters look a bit more angular in these early designs.



# sketch pad - ANN

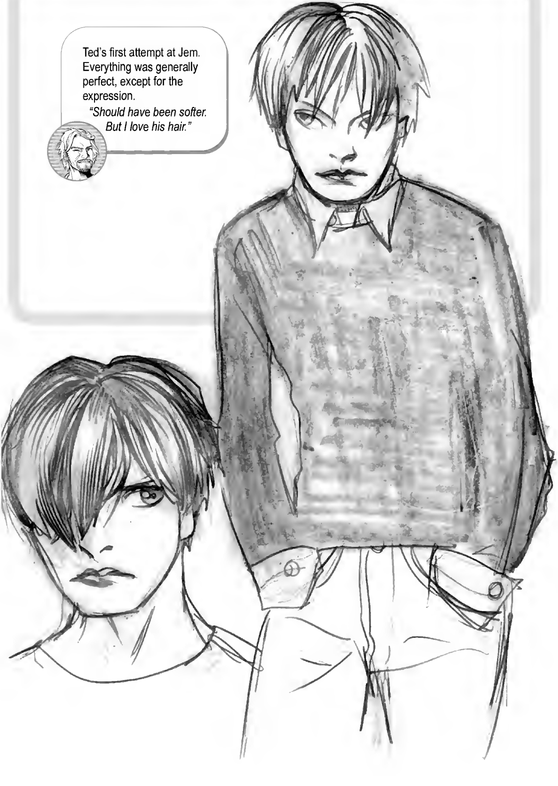


Elmer's second design attempt gave Ann longer hair and generally softened the look, but it also did what all the other designs couldn't--it found Ann's true essence.

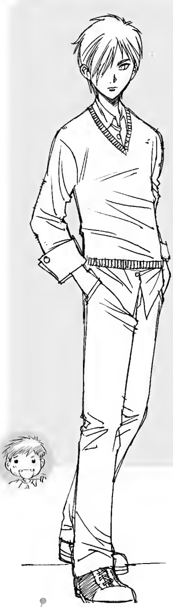
# sketch pad - JEM

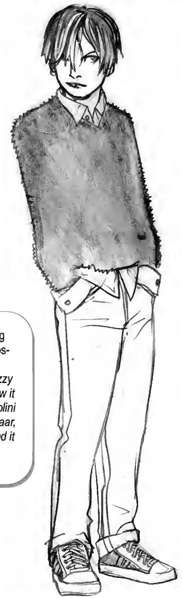
Ted's first attempt at Jem. Everything was generally perfect, except for the expression.

*"Should have been softer. But I love his hair."*



# sketch pad - JEM

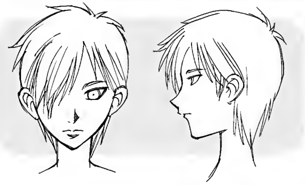




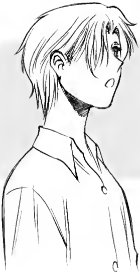
Here Ted was playing around with a few costumes.

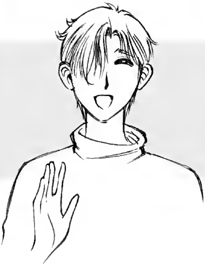
*"I really like the fuzzy sweater. I think I saw it in an Isabella Rossolini photo shoot for Bazaar, but I could never find it in my collection. Damn."*

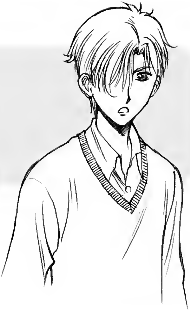
Conceived alongside Ann's initial character designs, Elmer's early sketches of Jem were also decidedly more shounen-flavored than shoujo.

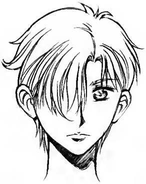


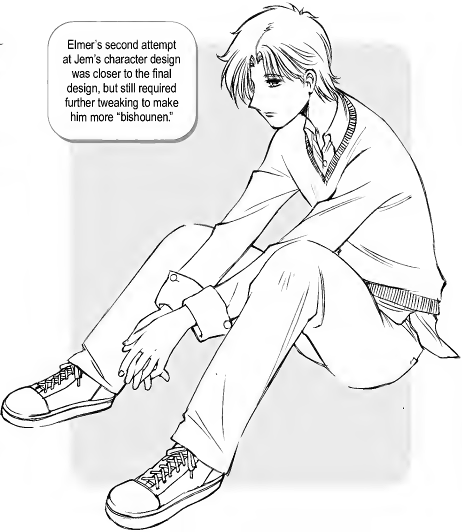
# sketch pad - JEM



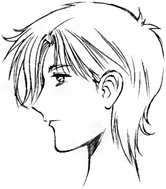


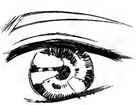






Elmer's second attempt at Jem's character design was closer to the final design, but still required further tweaking to make him more "bishounen."

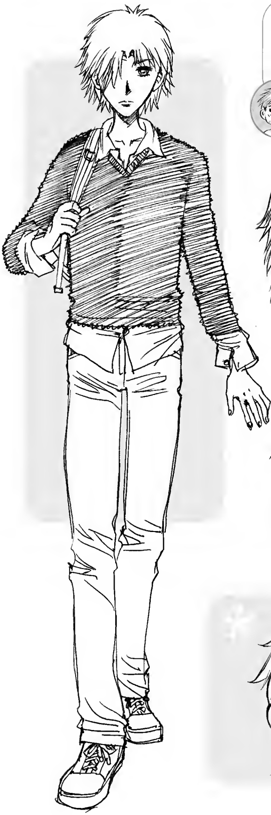


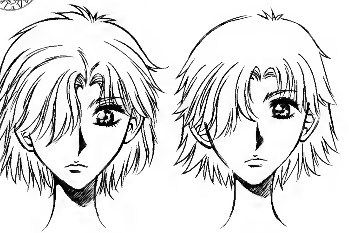


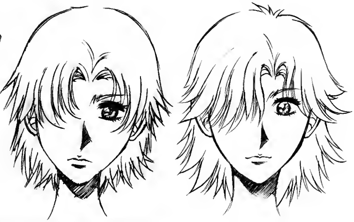
# sketch pad - JEM

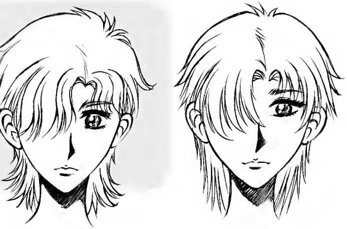
More studies of Jem.

*"I had to experiment with the hair a lot to come up with a better-looking "bishounen" look. In the end, we decided to go with the shoulder-level mullet (*)."*



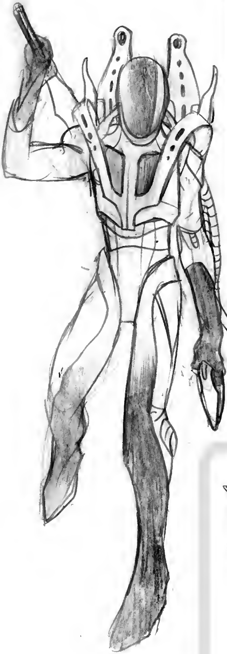


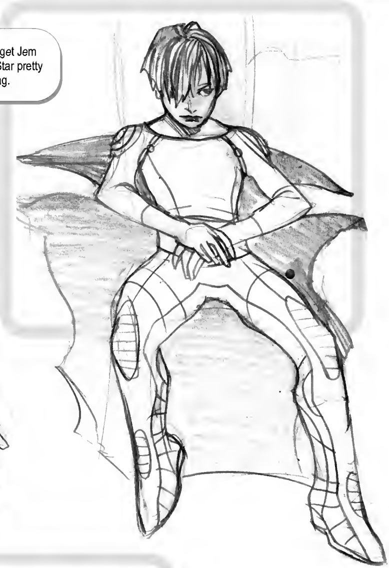


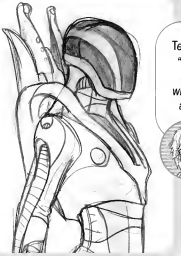


# sketch pad - STAR

In theory, if you can get Jem right, then you have Star pretty much in the bag.

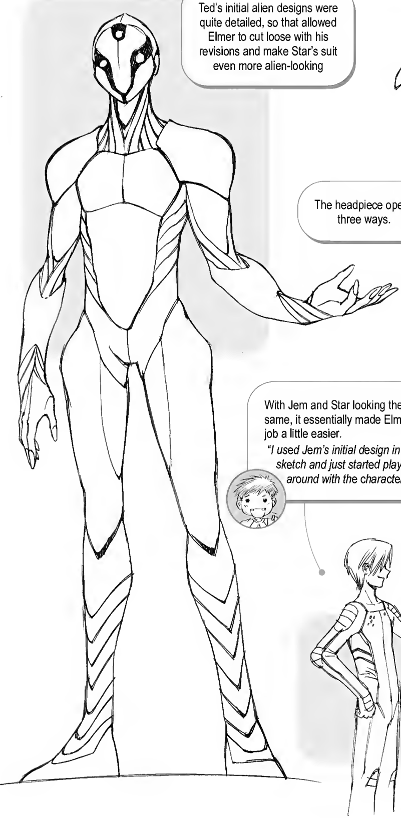




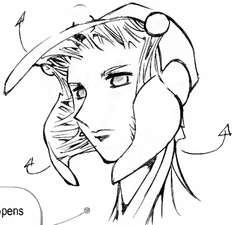


Ted's initial designs for Star's spacesuit. *"I love this costume design. Maybe I'll use it in something else. Elmer went with a much more* Guyver-esque *'chitin-and-meat' design for the space suits. I love them."*

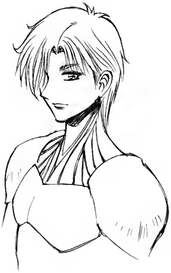
# sketch pad - STAR



Ted's initial alien designs were quite detailed, so that allowed Elmer to cut loose with his revisions and make Star's suit even more alien-looking

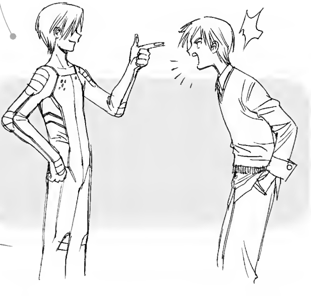


The headpiece opens three ways.



With Jem and Star looking the same, it essentially made Elmer's job a little easier.

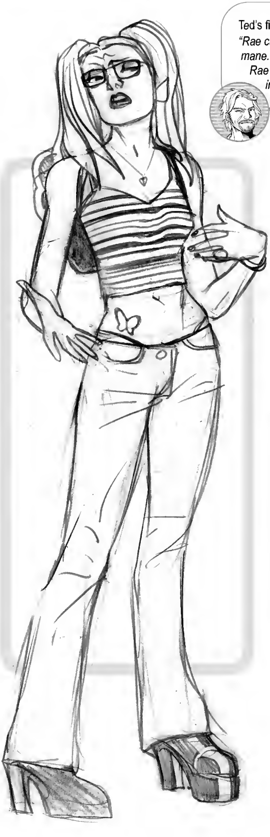
*"I used Jem's initial design in this sketch and just started playing around with the characters."*

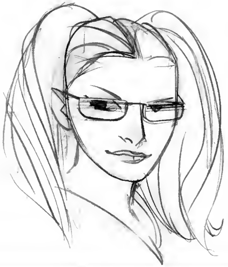


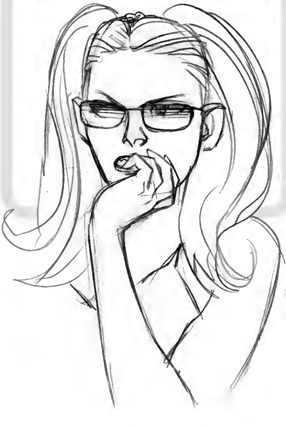
# sketch pad - RAE

Ted's first stab at Rae.

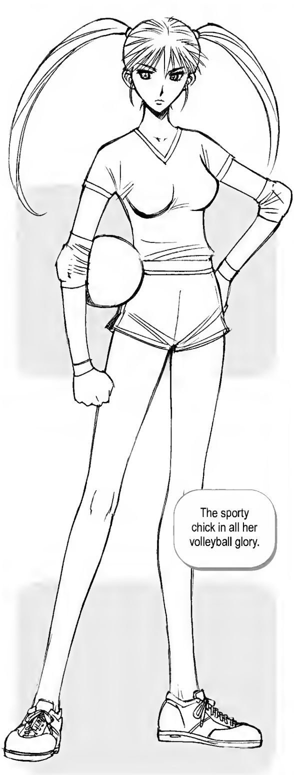
*"Rae came out great the first time. I wanted her hair to look like a lion's mane. I still like the shades a lot, but I realize that I couldn't have both Rae and Ann wearing glasses--which is something Elmer realized immediately. Though, I think my Rae is more L.A. than his."*



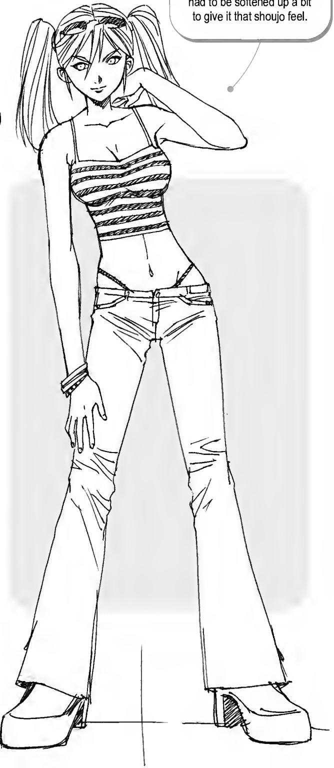




# sketch pad - RAE

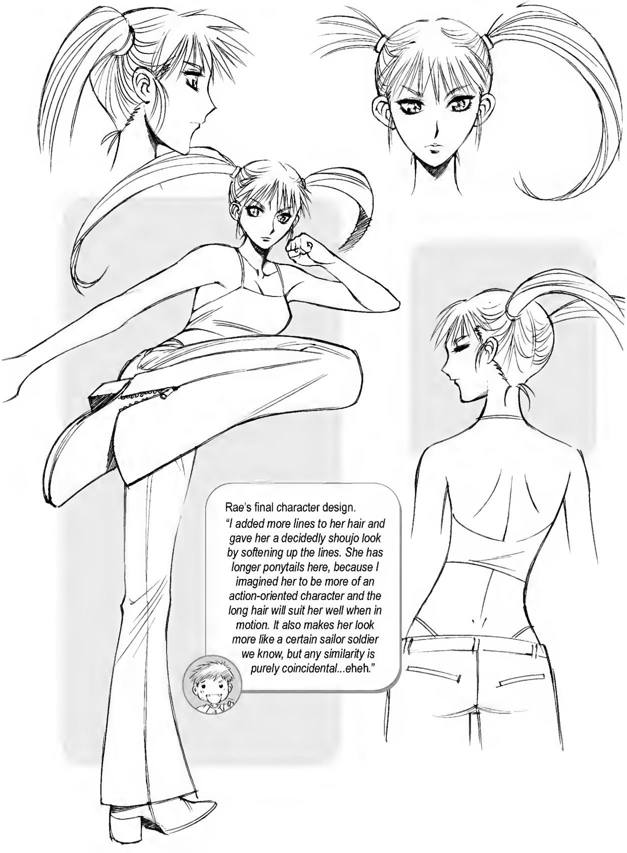


The sporty chick in all her volleyball glory.



Elmer's initial attempt at Rae's character design. As with Ann and Jem, the lines had to be softened up a bit to give it that shoujo feel.

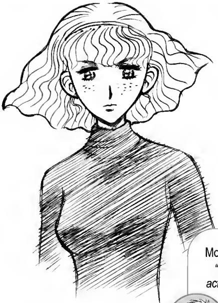
# sketch pad - RAE



Rae's final character design.

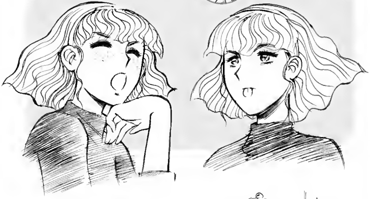
*"I added more lines to her hair and gave her a decidedly shoujo look by softening up the lines. She has longer ponytails here, because I imagined her to be more of an action-oriented character and the long hair will suit her well when in motion. It also makes her look more like a certain sailor soldier we know, but any similarity is purely coincidental...eheh."*

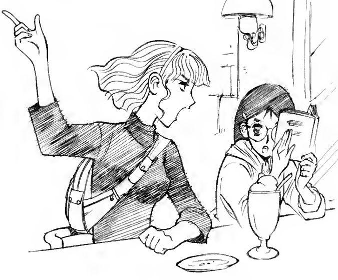
# sketch pad - NIKKI

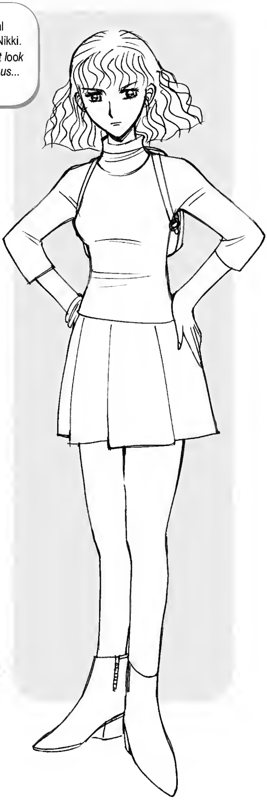


Elmer's initial designs for Nikki.
*"She doesn't look too obnoxious... yet."*

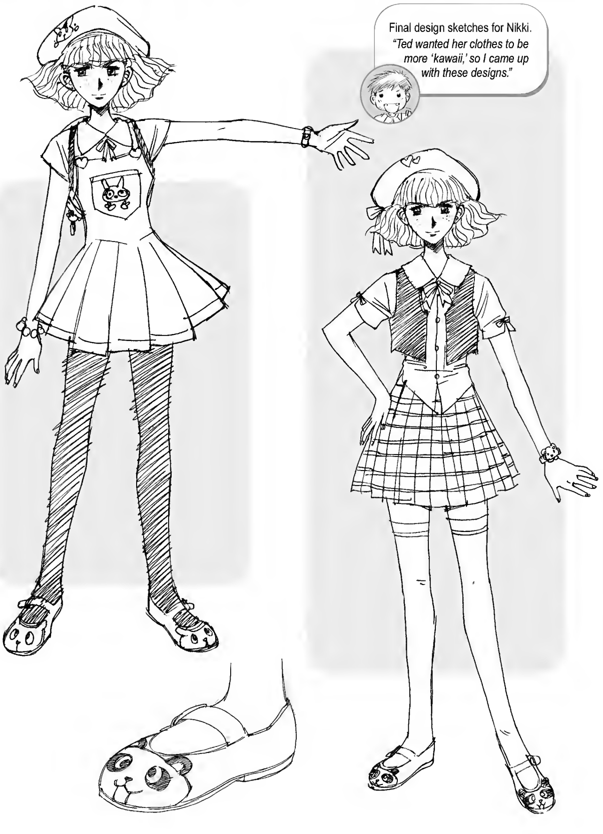
More designs of Nikki.
*"She didn't change, actually--apart from the wardrobe, that is."*





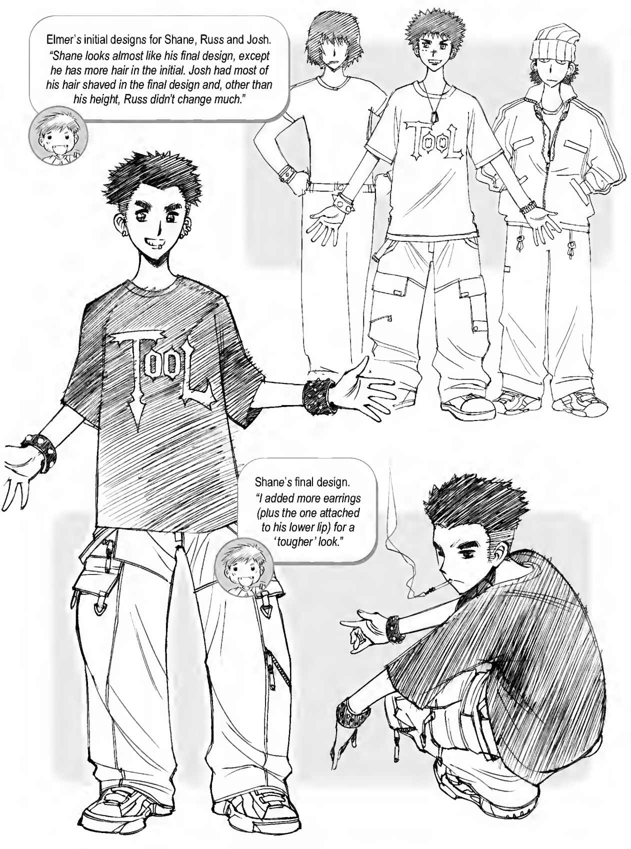


# sketch pad - NIKKI



Final design sketches for Nikki.
*"Ted wanted her clothes to be more 'kawaii,' so I came up with these designs."*

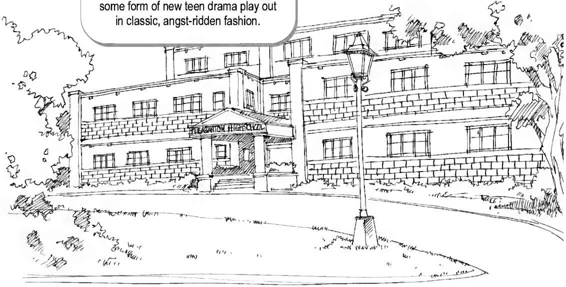
# sketch pad - SHANE



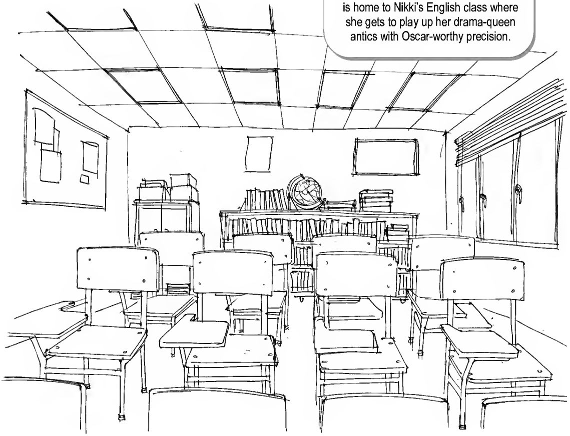
Elmer's initial designs for Shane, Russ and Josh. *"Shane looks almost like his final design, except he has more hair in the initial. Josh had most of his hair shaved in the final design and, other than his height, Russ didn't change much."*

Shane's final design. *"I added more earrings (plus the one attached to his lower lip) for a 'tougher' look."*

# sketch pad - SCENES

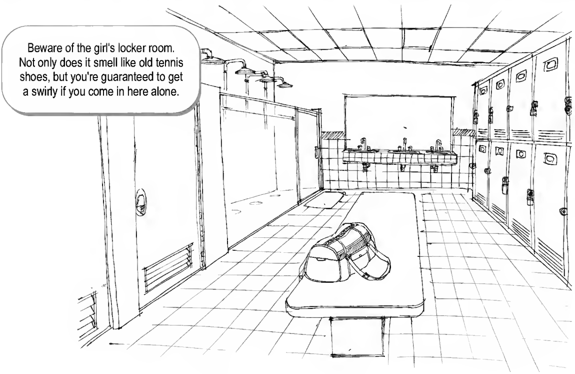


Welcome to Pleasanton High School, that special place where everyday sees some form of new teen drama play out in classic, angst-ridden fashion.

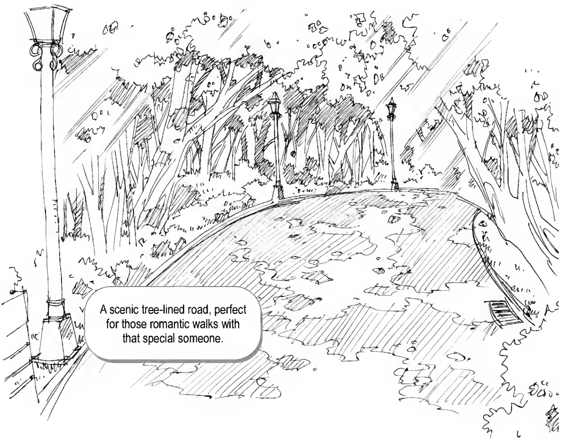


One of the many classrooms at Pleasanton High School. This particular one is home to Nikki's English class where she gets to play up her drama-queen antics with Oscar-worthy precision.

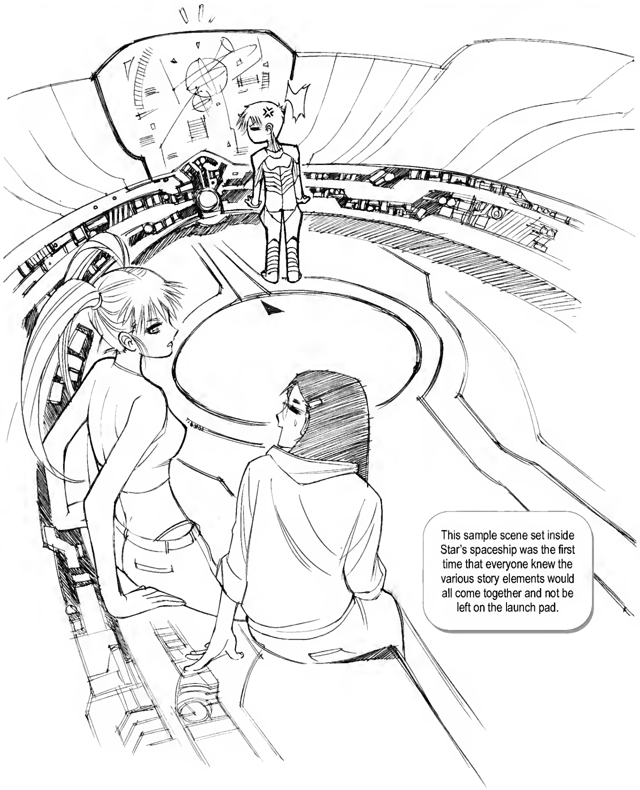
# sketch pad - SCENES



Beware of the girl's locker room. Not only does it smell like old tennis shoes, but you're guaranteed to get a swirly if you come in here alone.



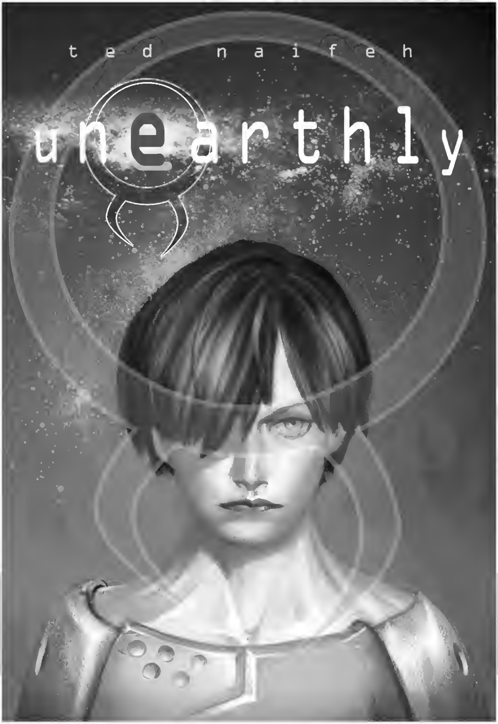
A scenic tree-lined road, perfect for those romantic walks with that special someone.



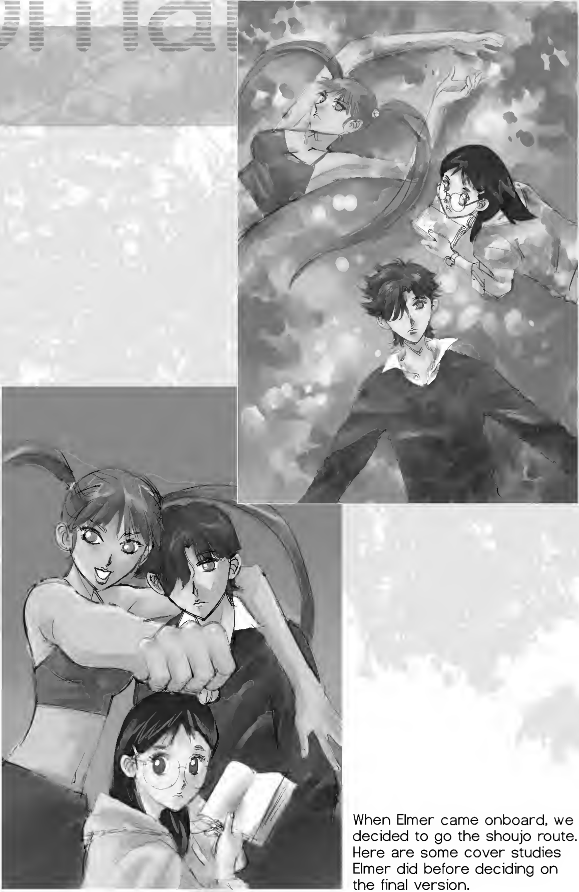
This sample scene set inside Star's spaceship was the first time that everyone knew the various story elements would all come together and not be left on the launch pad.

# UNEARTHLY

When Ted was still planning to draw Unearthly himself, he designed this rather striking cover. Talk about interstellar bad boys!


ted naifeh
unearthly

# omake

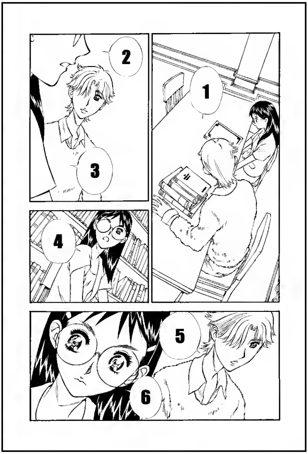


When Elmer came onboard, we decided to go the shoujo route. Here are some cover studies Elmer did before deciding on the final version.

the end
YOU'LL PAY WITH YOUR LIFE INSTEAD!
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT THE DRY CLEANING BILL.
I'VE HANDLED WORSE THAN YOU, BOY. ANYTIME YOU'RE READY
I'M THE SCHOOL KENDO CHAMPION! I CAN MESS YOU UP!
HUH?!
YOU GOT MUD ON MY FAVORITE
ALMOST JUST CROSS EASTERN BRIDGE AND—

## YOU'RE READING THE WRONG WAY

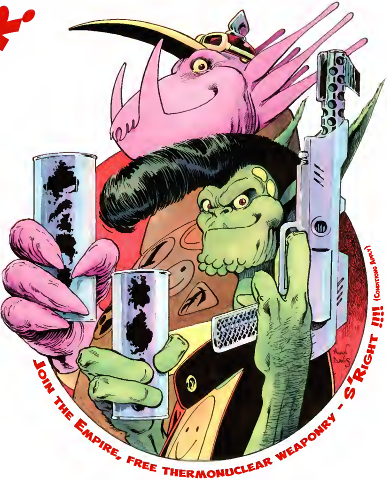
This is the last page of
***Unearthly*** Volume 1.



This book reads from right to left, Japanese style. To read from the beginning, flip the book over to the other side, start with the top right panel, and take it from there.

If this is your first time reading manga, just follow the diagram. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get used to it! Have fun!

# D.R. & QUINCH


Alan Davis
Join the Empire, free thermonuclear weaponry - s'right !!! (Conditions Apply)

K6 NW